

APPENDIX No. 4

Secondly, the meaning is that no mechanic shall be required or permitted to work under a Government contract more than eight hours in one day upon such work."

That is, the opinion of the United States Senate Committee was that unless these two conditions which I have mentioned were inserted, the law might be interpreted as prohibiting the working of more than eight hours a day, not merely on any other contract but by a man at his own home, and these two clauses were put in to specify that the eight hours referred merely to the work done on government work. If these two clauses were inserted I should imagine that it would be possible for the contractor to ask a man to put in an hour or two on some other work if he wanted to.

By Mr. Knowles:

Q. To put him on some other work for the government if it were a contract?—A. In the building trades it would not be feasible to have a man work on another job for an hour or two.

Mr. VERVILLE.—By the time he started the work it would be too late.

Prof. SKELTON.—I do not think it would be very feasible.

PROVISIONS OF FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS DEFINED.

By the Chairman:

Q. Has the Federal Committee not put in its law these sentences?—A. This was not in the federal law. This was in the later Bill presented which has not yet been enacted.

Q. Does their federal law apply to workmen generally in the employment of a contractor who has a government contract, or simply those workmen working on the contract?—A. Here we have the provision that the employment of labourers and mechanics upon any of the public works is limited and restricted to eight hours in any one calendar day.

Q. The point I want to make clear is, supposing a contractor employs a hundred men and has ten of those men working on a government contract. This Bill would seem to indicate that by virtue of the contractor having ten men working on a government contract the whole hundred would be bound by the eight-hour regulation. I think myself that is the effect.—A. Precisely, I think that is the way it reads, and I think that is why the Senate and the House of Representatives thought it necessary to introduce these safeguards. But in actual practice, so far as I have ascertained, the New York Act has not been invoked to cover either of these contingencies. It has not been interpreted as one would expect it must be interpreted to mean that a man in the employment of the contractor, even although not on government work, may be prohibited from working more than eight hours.

By Mr. Smith:

Q. That has not been carried out?—A. No one has taken advantage of it, although I think it is a possible interpretation.

By The Chairman:

Q. But as between the federal and the state governments, the state government could pass any law it pleased regulating the hours of labour, but when it comes to the federal government that government has only the right to restrict labourers directly or indirectly employed by it?—A. Yes.

Q. Then, these saving clauses would be a matter of some concern in a federal Bill, whereas they may not be in a state Bill?—A. I think that is true.