

the principle and practice of an eight-hour day should stand up in our places and proclaim our faith when we have an opportunity to do so.

Mr. A. B. CROSBY (Halifax). I do not think that anything can be gained by discussing at this time the question that has been brought before the House by the hon. member for Maisonneuve (Mr. Verville). It is evident that there is no desire on the part of the government to discuss this proposition in the way it should be discussed. I had been informed that it was to come up in this House at an earlier period of the session; in fact the hon. gentleman who has introduced it spoke to me about it, and I expected it would come up in a proper form, in the way of a resolution, and be submitted to the House and the country in a proper way. But as this has not been done, I do not propose to waste the time of the House in discussing a matter which would only mean to use idle words and to idle away the time. Nothing can be gained by doing so, after what we have just heard from the Minister of Labour. I do not think that it is up to this House to worry themselves very much over what the provinces are doing or what anybody else is doing. The question we have to consider is whether we are prepared to adopt the principle of an eight-hour day in government contracts. I have no hesitation in placing myself on record on that question, and in saying that I think it should be done. It is up to this government to show the provincial governments an example. This proposal can only be brought forward for the purpose of allowing some hon. gentleman to make little speeches, so that they may be able to tell their constituents that something was being done, while as a matter of fact nothing was being done.

Mr. D. HENDERSON (Halton). I have no desire to sit silent and allow this motion to be voted upon, if there is a motion. Some hon. gentleman says there is no motion. At any rate, I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion on the question that has been brought forward by the hon. member for Maisonneuve (Mr. Verville). I sympathize with him in his desire to draw towards himself the workmen of his section of the country, in his extreme desire to make them believe that he is a lion fighting in their interest, that, as the head and front of the Trades and Labour Council, he is doing everything he can to secure something for the workmen of the country. Now to state my position briefly, I do not believe in class legislation of this kind. I believe that a man working on a government contract has just as good a right to work ten hours a day as a man

working in a factory or on a farm. I do not see why we should pay a man more for working on a public building, say on the museum in the city of Ottawa, than a man working on a private building on the other side of the street, the one working eight hours and the other ten.

Why should we grant favours to one working man and do nothing for the other? It shows that the hon. gentleman has no interest in the working men as a class but only in a few. This question has no application to my own county and consequently I speak on it with the utmost freedom. We have no government contracts in the county, and I suppose that as long as the present government is in power and I am in this House there may not be any government contracts. I do not want labour to be disturbed by mischievous legislation of this kind. It would be a disturbing thing, as I said, all over the country to have a law that a man, because he is working for the government, would be paid full price for his labour and work only eight hours, while the man who was otherwise employed would have to work 10 hours a day. The thing is so utterly and absolutely inconsistent that I do not believe the working-men themselves can be deceived by it. Therefore I have no sympathy with the hon. gentleman's speech, of which I did not hear a word, because he did not speak loudly, while the hon. gentleman who read an essay from the back part of the House read it in such a low tone that we did not get the benefit of it. The other hon. gentleman, unfortunately, spoke in French, and I could not catch all that he said. Whatever he did say I presume was along the line of making a little cheap capital and these hon. gentlemen are welcome to all they can get out of it. In my county hon. gentlemen will find no sympathy with this movement. I have received protests against this legislation. We do not want class legislation of this kind, we want fair play for all; what is good for one working-man is good for all. There may be certain classes of labour such as mining and underground work which is dangerous or exceptionally trying and it is only proper that men engaged in such employment should work shorter hours. But the position that a man employed on a public building, simply because it is being erected by the government, is to be turned loose two hours sooner than the other man who is working on a private building is so utterly and absolutely absurd that I do not expect that the hon. gentleman ever thinks of making this House believe that such a law could be passed.

Motion agreed to, and House went into Committee of Supply.