

If we had not to-day the machinery we have for dealing with industrial disputes, which has been developed over the years, I should like to know where we would be at the present time in the matter of prosecuting this war, and in procuring the supply of munitions and supplies which we are producing. The wisdom of a measure of this kind is in what it anticipates, how far it looks into the future and may help to meet the needs of the future. I mentioned only one or two enactments of the Department of Labour. They are enactments with which I had personally to do at that time, and I have followed them with interest ever since, for that among other reasons. I should mention another act which, as a matter of fact, when later I became Minister of Labour, I introduced in this house. It was the Combines Investigation Act. That again was the outgrowth of the then Department of Labour and its work. What had become the method of dealing with industrial disputes became the method of dealing with trusts, combines and monopolies and their anti-social methods in some of their developments. Will anyone say that that work has not been of national service or that it has not been very much needed? If we had not had that act on the statutes, I venture to say the growth of monopolies, trusts and cartels in this country would have been such as few of us at the moment can conceive.

I recall that the first labour legislation that was passed in this parliament was a measure dealing with fair wages on government contracts. That was a measure that subsequently led to the establishment of the Department of Labour. That measure dealt only with government contracts. Comment was made this afternoon from the opposite side of the house in these words: "Tell us what there are in the way of government services that deal with the question of welfare that this department is to have anything to do with? Just what are the federal government services that are to be controlled?" A list of them has been given in section 5 of the bill; but what I wish to point out is that the first work of the federal government in Canada dealing with labour questions related to government departments. It began by seeing that the workers on government work were given a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. That measure subsequently led to the enactment of maximum hours of work and minimum wages which should be paid on all government contracts. That has led to a service throughout this dominion which has secured for the working classes of this country, not only on federal government work, but on work of the provinces as well, working conditions, wages and hours which

may be regarded as fair and just. There is a great measure of social justice applied to government contract work which, but for the establishment, at that time, of the Department of Labour in this country, would not have existed until much later.

I might go on and refer to other measures. I speak of these measures particularly, because I have had to do with them myself. I have watched the effect of the establishment of departments dealing with social questions and where they are likely to lead. Mention has been made several times in the debate in this house of old age pensions. Some hon. gentlemen on the opposite side of the house have been seeking to take credit to their groups for having had to do with the establishment of old age pensions. May I say that if there had not been a Liberal administration in office at the time, which was interested in social questions we would have no old age pensions established at the time we did in Canada. It was the hon. members on this side of the house, who had the majority, who were able to put through measures of social legislation and who, to a man, supported my proposal in this house that we should have old age pensions established in this country. But I recall that there again objection was raised on this score of jurisdiction. It was said, what jurisdiction had this dominion in matters of old age pensions? We had to recognize the fact that we had no jurisdiction to establish an old age pension measure and administer it under this federal government. To administer such a measure it was necessary for us first of all to secure an amendment to the British North America Act. If we had been indifferent to the matter of our social legislation we probably would have taken refuge in the fact that the British North America Act was too big a measure for us to attempt to change; but we appreciated the need. We felt that the provinces could not be expected to take up a measure of this kind unless we gave them some assistance, and in order to ensure an old age pensions act being established in Canada we agreed to give assistance to the provinces, provided that they would join with us in enacting the necessary legislation. We passed a measure, a provision of which was that, if the provinces would contribute half, the federal government would contribute half of what was necessary to pay old age pensions, in the several provinces. So as to avoid any question of jurisdiction we agreed to leave the administration of the measure to the provinces.

In saying the British North America Act had to be amended, I had in my mind more