

deems it the duty of the Government to take immediate steps to give effect thereto. It is hereby declared that the work to which the foregoing policy shall apply includes not only work undertaken by the Government itself, but also all works aided by grant of Dominion public funds.

I turn to the report of my hon. friend the Minister of Labour for the year 1914, where I find the following with reference to these contracts:

In most of the contracts to which this policy applies, the minimum wage, rates to be observed are specified in the contract. In other cases a general clause is inserted that all mechanics, labourers, or other persons employed in connection therewith shall be paid 'such wages as are generally accepted as current for competent workmen in the district, and if there is no current rate in the district, then a fair and reasonable rate, and shall not be required to work for longer hours than those fixed by the custom of the trade in the district where the work is carried on except for the protection of life or property, or in the case of other emergencies. The policy of the Government in respect of the insertion of the fair wage schedule or general fair wages clause is followed in the construction of public works of many different kinds in all parts of Canada, and also in the manufacture of certain classes of Government supplies, the operations covered by this policy amounting in the aggregate to many millions of dollars.'

Then it goes on to say:

In addition to the preparation of fair wage clauses for Government contracts, the Department of Labour has been called upon to furnish fair wage conditions for insertion in contracts for railway construction to which Parliament has granted financial aid either in the form of subsidy or guarantee.

So that these contracts for munitions of war and other supplies, if let directly by the Government of Canada, would contain the fair wage clause to which I refer. But it has been said—and this matter has been discussed in the country—that to contracts which have been let not by the Dominion Government directly, but by the committee of Council acting for foreign governments, the fair wage clause does not apply, the contracts not being let directly by the Government of Canada. Having regard to the fact that these are British Government contracts, I wish to point out in this connection that a resolution was passed on February 13, 1891, in the Imperial House of Commons under which it was provided that the fair wage clause should be included in all their contracts. The resolution was in the following terms:

That in the opinion of this House, it is the duty of the Government, in all government contracts, to make provision against the evils re-

[Mr. Macdonald.]

cently disclosed before the Sweating Committee, to insert such conditions as may prevent the abuse arising from sub-letting, and to make every effort to secure the payment of such wages as are generally accepted as current in each trade for competent workmen.

I submit, therefore, that it is open to the Committee of Council or to any other committee appointed by the Government to deal with supplies or munitions required by other governments, and particularly by the Imperial Government, and to insert in each contract a fair wage clause similar to that inserted in Dominion Government contracts, thus protecting the workmen of Canada at this juncture and securing for them fair hours and reasonable wages.

I do not wish to go into the details of this matter further than to say that cases have come to my knowledge where industries engaged in the manufacture of munitions of war have reduced the wages of their employees as much as twenty-five per cent. This may have been due to other causes arising from the depression existing before the war began, but I submit that any contractor carrying out a contract for supplies for the Imperial Government should be asked by council to submit to the same fair wage schedule to which he would be subject if he were working for the Dominion Government.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: To what munitions of war does my hon. friend refer?

Mr. MACDONALD: Shells, more particularly.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I do not think the Committee of Council deals with that; the matter is controlled by a committee constituted altogether outside this Government, which is acting for the British Government in that respect.

Mr. MACDONALD: That may be so, but it is understood that the principal committee to which I refer, that is, the one concerned with the manufacture of shells, was nominated by this Government.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Nominated, I think, in the first instance, by the Minister of Militia.

Mr. MACDONALD: I brought the question up for the purpose of asking the Government to see that by either the Committee of Council that is to deal with the matter or by any other committee that has been selected by them to overlook or deal with Imperial contracts, the fair wage clause, which would be