

I do not know that it would be more pleasing to God that the young men should skip out of the village early in the morning to spend all day in the bush, shooting at game, than that they should spend an hour in the afternoon shooting at a mark. Of course, they will not be so much seen. And, for my part, I think that this question of being seen or not being seen is to a large extent, the explanation of several clauses of this virtuous legislation.

Mr. RALPH SMITH. If he is in the bush he will not disturb anybody.

Mr. BOURASSA. Of course, the hypocrite at home will not be disturbed, if the young man is far enough away in the bush. But how about the desecration of the Sabbath? And, if the young man in the bush happens to be near a public road, as he may easily be, he will disturb and may even kill the people passing on that road. Or, even under this proposed amendment, a dozen or a score of young men may gather, as is often done, and organize a match to shoot at pigeons, or turkeys, and, so far as the law is concerned, they can go on shooting all day Sunday, even during Divine service. All this, apparently, would not be desecrating the Sabbath; but if the young men get together in the afternoon, and even using light carbines the noise of which cannot be heard at a hundred yards, spend an hour at shooting at a mark, they are to be declared criminals and to fall under the penalties of this legislation. No matter what clause of this Bill is taken up, you have only to consider it but a very short time to see its utter absurdity.

But it was not simply for the purpose of discussing this precious clause, that I rose, but to express my opinion of the doctrine enunciated by the Prime Minister. Against that doctrine of the Prime Minister I protest. The Prime Minister said that this legislation had been submitted to all Christian denominations. I think I may, respectfully, take exception to that statement. Perhaps the object of it has been submitted to some of the people of every Christian denomination. Perhaps all Christian denominations may have been asked if they are in favour of Sunday observance. But that, I believe, is as far as the facts will carry. The Prime Minister has stated that no protest was raised in this House against the principle of this legislation. Sir, when this Bill reached the committee stage—that is, the first day it was under discussion—I entered the strongest protest I could against the principle of the Bill, which, I said, was against the public law of any British country, was opposed to the very principle of British criminal law, and wholly out of accord with the working of British institutions. The fact that I have stated that I am in favour of Sunday observance does not commit me as being in

favour of the principle of this Bill. Ninety-nine per cent of the people who have petitioned in favour of Sunday observance, have never read this Bill, and, of those who have read it, ninety-nine per cent do not know what it means. The moment it is explained to them and they understand what it means, I believe that the signers of these petitions will feel they were influenced by false representations—not, of course, from the desire of deceiving them, but from the very worthy motive of having a Sunday observance law passed. I say that when these people discover how far and how deeply they have been deceived as to the real scope of this measure, you will not find a majority—I go further and say you will not find a fraction—of the people of any province to favour either the principle or the scope of the Bill as it is.

Mr. W. ROCHE (Halifax.) How does the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bourassa) prove that?

Mr. BOURASSA. How do I prove it? I know something of the British people, I know that there is one thing for which the British people have fought in all lands and in all ages,—and I trust British Canadians have not degenerated—and that is for their individual liberty. In this Bill you are interfering with the individual liberty of every citizen of this country without his knowing it. Why, there was not one member of this House who understood exactly a week ago, what this Bill meant. More,—there was not a member of this government who knew what it meant. We have evidence of that in the proposals made day after day by the government and in the amendments they accept and the amendments they reject. Why, we have this absurd condition of things: those who prepared this legislation, from whom the government received it, from whom they received their inspiration, from whom they received their orders—the very men who have handed this legislation to the government—have accepted one clause as meaning something, which the Minister of Justice (Mr. Aylesworth) has declared it does not mean;—and then, after all, that hon. gentleman tells us that we cannot touch it. What does that show? It shows that the government themselves are not free to carry out what they regard as the intention and principle of the Bill. The government as I have said, have been enlightened by the direct rays from these sources,—these very respectable sources, and they renounce their freedom of action. Is that denied? I myself deprecated the idea, when I said in this House that not the Lord's Day Alliance but the government were the authors of this Bill. But now, aside from the strange declaration of the Prime Minister to-day, I have also the declaration of the Lord's Day Alliance themselves. In the issue of their little paper for April, 1906, they say: