

the contrary, federal assistance was given to the provincial police authorities in quelling some disturbances which had arisen through the demands which are now embodied, in principle, in this resolution. Subsequently, and during the recess, I was advised through the medium of the press that as the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Treaty of Peace contained references to working hours that might be adopted all over the world, the Federal Government was ascertaining from the Supreme Court of Canada whether it was competent to legislate along the lines which had been demanded at the last session. I am also advised through the press that this Government has jurisdiction in these matters, and I was therefore surprised that in the speech from the Throne a matter of such great importance to the welfare and stability of society in Canada was not referred to. One need give only a cursory study to the progress of labour matters in the Old Country as well as here to learn that labour has been exploited to the extent that in some cases it has sought a remedy by revolutionary methods. Fortunately those methods have not been adopted in Canada, for there has been a disposition on the part of the provincial and Federal governments to assist in every possible way. That very excellent piece of legislation, the Lemieux Act, passed by the late Liberal Government, has given great satisfaction all over this Dominion and has saved the people of this country from many difficulties. Now that we are engaged on reconstruction, which is the word that is used to describe what is going on all over this world, it is only right that this Government should take steps of its own initiative to see that labour is given that measure of consideration which it has been demanding. Rather than adopt this resolution I should like to have the Ministers of the Crown announce that they intend to introduce a Bill this session along the lines suggested in the resolution.

The hon. member for Prescott (Mr. Proulx) has expressed the fear that a reduction in the hours of the working day will mean diminished production. That is an argument that has been advanced in all countries by those who oppose legislation such as is being sought by the labour people in Canada to-day. I have here a book published by Mr. John R. Common, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Wisconsin, in collaboration with Mr. John B. Andrews, Secretary of the American Association for Labour Legislation, after a very careful study of labour conditions in

[Mr. H. A. Mackie.]

America and elsewhere, and I find—page 202—the following statement:

Aside from their weaker physique, the "long day" is especially onerous for women workers because of the double burden of domestic duties and wage work which many of them carry. Ordinarily, men can rest when their day's toil is over, but there are few working girls who do not have at least mending and laundering to do in the evenings, and many married women must take the entire care of their homes and children before and after work.

Moreover,—

And this is in answer to the remark of my hon. friend opposite—

Moreover, long hours do not necessarily make for the greatest economy and efficiency in production. It is sometimes argued that if hours are reduced output will decline proportionately. This might be true if human beings were mere machines and not living creatures who grow tired. But as a matter of fact the law of diminishing returns operates nowhere more strikingly than in regard to hours of labour. Studies of output before and after a shortening of hours show that where the human element enters into production, hour reductions by no means necessarily imply a decrease in output.

On motion of Mr. H. A. Mackie, the debate was adjourned.

At six o'clock the House adjourned, without question being put, pursuant to rule.

Thursday, March 11, 1920.

The House met at Three o'clock.

FRANCHISE ACT.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND THE ELECTORAL FRANCHISE BILL INTRODUCED BY HON. HUGH GUTHRIE.

Hon. HUGH GUTHRIE (Minister of Militia and Acting Solicitor General) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 12, respecting the Election of Members of the House of Commons and the Electoral Franchise.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Explain.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might be permitted to explain briefly the Bill which I have just asked the leave of the House to introduce. The purpose of the Bill is threefold: In the first place, to fix a uniform franchise throughout the Dominion; in the second place, to provide a uniform method for the preparation of voters' lists; and, in the third place, to provide a simple and satisfactory method for the conduct of elections.

The franchise is to be established upon very broad principles. The only require-