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AN EIGHT-HOUR LABOR LAW.

The contractors and engineers of Canada will be very much interested in Bill No. 21, which is being introduced into the Canadian House of Commons by Mr. Ver-ville. The provisions of the bill are:—

1. Every contract to which the Government of Canada is a party, which may involve the employment of laborers, workmen or mechanics, shall contain a stipulation that no laborer, workman or mechanic in the employ of the contractor or sub-contractor, or other person doing or contracting to do the whole or a part of the work contemplated by the contract, shall be permitted or required to work more than eight hours in any one calendar day, except in cases of extraordinary emergency caused by fire, flood or danger to life or property.

2. Every such contract hereafter made shall contain a provision that unless the person or corporation making or performing it complies with the provisions of this Act, the contract shall be void, and the person or corporation shall not be entitled to receive any sum, nor shall any officer, agent or employee of the Government of Canada pay or authorize payment from the funds under his charge or control to the person or corporation for work done upon or in connection with the contract which in its form or manner of performance violates the provisions of this Act.

3. This Act shall apply to work undertaken by the Government of Canada by day labor.

The question of an eight-hour day has been much debated. An eight-hour day is not all good for the workman nor all bad for the contractor.

As a rule the contractor will get more work per hour in an eight-hour day than in a ten-hour day, but in this bill there is one danger that should be avoided.

It should not be allowed to become law until such time as all Government contracts now let or under way are completed.

All Government contracts carry a fair wage schedule. Conditions will, and do, demand that men working eight hours shall receive the same wages per day as men working ten hours. The contractor now working will be unable to secure men to complete his work unless he advances his wages, and frequently any advance would turn a profitable contract into a losing undertaking.

The bill should be carefully considered, and if necessary the contractors should be prepared to present their views on the measure at a meeting of a Special Committee of the House of Commons on March 9th, 1910.

THE GERMAN SURTAX.

The Canadian Engineer does not wish to discuss trade relations or tariff questions, but the recent an-