

Industrial Relations Act

Surely in the light of these factors, plus the genuine faith and confidence that was placed in the ability and honesty of this eminent jurist, it is incumbent on all hon. members to sustain his recommendations which in essence are embodied in my motion.

Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, while I agree with the spirit and terms of this resolution I do not feel it goes far enough, nor do I feel it deals adequately with the problems to which it refers. If we are going to amend the law to deal with the problems of technological innovation or automation—if I may I will use that word to include all types of technological change or innovation—we should do so in a way which will take into consideration the entire problem and provide for a more comprehensive solution. We should consider not only rail-roading but all industries and commerce where automation is probable.

More specifically, I do not feel that the present resolution is adequate for the following reasons. It does not contemplate action at an early enough stage really to prevent disputes concerning automation. If dislocations resulting from automation are to be properly handled they must be considered when the possible innovation is first studied. If consideration is left until a new contract comes up for bargaining it may be too late to make the proper adjustments.

There is also a feeling by many people that these problems could be more adequately dealt with away from the bargaining table and that collective bargaining is often too much beset by pressures, delays and multiple cross-currents. There is also the fact that the vast majority of the workers affected by automation are not organized for collective bargaining, and something must be done for them.

I should like to refer to an address given by Walter Reuther to a committee of the 86th Congress of the United States on automation. Mr. Reuther said that while collective bargaining has an essential role to play in meeting the problems raised by automation it cannot provide all the answers. He said that negotiated programs must function side by side with public programs, that negotiated retraining programs, for example, cannot meet the needs of all workers who require retraining. Nor can negotiated relocation programs help the employees of a firm which has gone out of business. Mr. Reuther also suggested that in addition programs similar to

those negotiated through collective bargaining will have to be provided for the millions of workers still unorganized.

If we are to have a complete, balanced and co-ordinated program then it is necessary that the measures suggested in this resolution be considered in conjunction with other measures, especially those which entail direct government action. To begin with, we must recognize that automation is a good thing for society. In that same address by Walter Reuther to which I referred earlier, he foresaw a rate of growth in the United States of 5 per cent per annum as the result of the introduction of automation and he pointed out that this increased production could lead to many good things such as the elimination of poverty, improved standards of living, improved standards of health, the elimination of slums and increased assistance to underdeveloped countries. But at the same time we must also recognize that automation creates difficulty. It leads to many problems and often leads to labour displacement. It leads to decreases in manufacturing employment, increases in white collar and service employment, industrial concentration, commercial amalgamation, centralization and the desertion of many towns and communities.

Mr. Justice Freedman in his report, which was referred to by the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Fawcett), made some suggestions about the implementation of technological innovation. I consider the report of Mr. Justice Freedman to be outstanding and progressive. It contains a lot of very good information regarding the changes in society brought about by technological change and automation. Mr. Justice Freedman stated that implementation of technological innovation places a responsibility on all parties—government, labour and management. I should like to refer to a few of his statements, the first of which appears at page 84 of his report:

The old concept of labour as a commodity simply will not suffice; it is at once wrong and dangerous. Hence there is a responsibility upon the entrepreneur who introduces technological change to see that it is not effected at the expense of his working force. That is the human aspect of the technological challenge, and it must not be ignored.

Later he states on the same page:

There are responsibilities upon labour as well. Perhaps chief among them is not to use its organized strength in blind and wilful resistance to technological advances. Labour must recognize the constructive role of technology in the general welfare and economic strength of the nation.