

exporting nation will be faced with the very serious problem of remaining competitive in world markets. A factor which assists greatly in maintaining a competitive position is the application of technological progress to our productive processes, and if we do not remain competitive in world markets, there is likely to be more impairment of the job security of Canadian employees than any impairment that is likely to result from technological change as feared by those who have embodied these provisions in this bill. We have in Canada today a great many programs for the retraining of technicians and even professionals, and for upgrading the skills of workers. A great deal of progress has been made in the field of adult education, especially in the technical skills. But very few of these programs have been directly related to an effort to remove fear in the minds of employees of losing their employment by reason of technological change.

• (2150)

The criteria we use for qualifying an individual to obtain assistance in upgrading his skills and abilities are very rarely related to technological change. It may well be that this is where we are in error. I would like to see us get to the point where loss of employment or threat of loss of employment as a result of technological progress would become a major qualification entitling a worker to be generously assisted by the government and industry in upgrading his skills or acquiring a new skill that would qualify him for a new position more remunerative and rewarding than the one he is afraid he might lose.

It is not outside the realm of possibility, by gearing assistance in upgrading skills and abilities to the danger of loss of employment through technological progress, to achieve the goal we are talking about in the provisions of the bill. But if we did it that way we might well come to the point where, instead of technological change being regarded by the worker as something to fear, it would be regarded as a development that would qualify him for an opportunity to upgrade his skills and take on a more remunerative and rewarding position. This would not only remove the fear of job insecurity presently created by technological progress but would completely alter the attitude of employees towards technological progress. Technological change would become a step leading to the improvement of their position in industry instead of something to fear because it might take away their job.

I do not want to belabour this matter longer. I express these concerns which I know are shared by a great many people across this country. These are not people who want to see the legitimate concern of labour for job security treated lightly. They are people who fear that the provisions in this bill concerning technological change are going to impede technological progress, and, in the long run, be to the disadvantage of the employee, the employer and, also, the consumer who benefits when we devise new technology to produce better goods at less cost.

I hope when this bill is in committee these points will receive further consideration. I do feel that the bill as presently drafted, particularly with respect to these sections, is dangerous to the good and welfare of employers and employees, and the Canadian people as a whole.

**Hon. Muriel McQ. Fergusson:** Honourable senators, after listening to Senator Goldenberg explain and discuss

Bill C-183 in such a brilliant and knowledgeable manner, I fear you will consider it presumptuous of me to rise to participate in the debate for I am no expert on labour legislation, nor have I had actual experience, as Senator Goldenberg has, in the field of conciliation.

Senator Manning, in his usual logical and persuasive manner, has outlined his doubts about the method proposed by this bill to carry out the objectives with which he is in agreement. I cannot agree with Senator Manning's arguments. I do not think that this bill will impede technological progress in Canada.

Like all members of this house I am greatly concerned about the present situation in Canada regarding the difficulties between labour and management. I am also deeply interested in social questions, and the relations between people. Perhaps these are sufficient reasons for me to speak briefly in support of Bill C-183 which, in my mind, is one of the most significant bills, if not the most significant, which has been sent to us from the other place during the present session of Parliament.

It seems inexplicable to me that with the great progress Canada has made in recent years, especially in the sixties and seventies, as shown by the increase in our gross national product and the fact that we have one of the highest standards of living in the world, the great prosperity of our country is not being shared fairly by the people of Canada. No one can deny this lack of sharing when we know that 25 per cent of Canadians, approximately two-thirds of whom are not on welfare but comprise the working poor, are existing on incomes below the poverty line set by the Special Senate Committee on Poverty as well as the poverty line set by the Economic Council of Canada.

The preamble to Bill C-183 makes it clear that the government desires that support be extended to labour and to management in their co-operative efforts to continue and develop good relations and constructive bargaining practices. The preamble to the bill also makes it clear that the government considers the development of good industrial relations between these two powerful forces in our society to be in the best interest of the country, and that such good relations are necessary if we are going to ensure—and I am quoting from the preamble—"a just share of the fruits of progress to all."

The bill is designed to make it possible for the differences between the rights of owners and employers—that is the rights of management and the rights of labour to be clarified and settled without strife, and, more particularly, that they be settled before such differences lead not only to strife but to strikes, which we know often result in violence. In Canada, although we believe in the freedom of the individual, we also recognize that together with freedom there must be social responsibility.

In the past there has been little social conscience displayed by business and management which appear to be motivated entirely by the objective of making money. On the other hand, the efforts of trade unions to improve social conditions for their members, who comprise 35 to 40 per cent of the labour force, have often been considered as excessive, and have resulted at times in unnecessary inconvenience and hardship to those not involved in the disputes. For these reasons there has developed among