

The second encouraging result to be seen in the trend of settlements is the breadth of social consciousness reflected in them. Problems such as those of standards of living, leisure time, old age and the workers' security on the job are all reflected in the bargaining of the past decade.

We can only guess at the total benefit these changes have had for industry and for Canada. There is no doubt that the worker does, under present-day conditions, feel a good deal of freedom and security on the job.

Some observers are concerned with this development; they have expressed foreboding over the future reactions of what they refer to as self-satisfied workers. On the other hand, there are others who are enthusiastic about the prospects for greater production.

What has been the result so far, in this post-war period, of all these changes upon Canada's productivity? Well, during the period our GNP has more than doubled.

Conceivably, either reaction could follow our present ways of handling industrial relations, but society in general appears to favour an optimistic view of the benefits. There is little doubt that our concept of just what degree of security should be available for the worker and, in fact, the public in general has changed and we favour giving the worker some peace of mind as a means of increasing his contribution to society.

Regardless of what your views and mine may be, however, it is in collective bargaining that the answers to this and other such problems are today being thrashed out. Obviously, such problems have important implications for the country generally.

It is noteworthy that society as a group does not always make its presence effectively known at the bargaining table. However, it is my firm view that by and large labour and management are using collective bargaining to achieve sane and fair solutions to problems in which the public interest is concerned.

By and large, also, they are serving the public interest by settling their disputes without interruption to production. Labour and management have, in fact, an impressive record for settling their own bargaining.

Approximately 7,000 collective agreements are now in effect in various sections of Canadian industry. Most of these are negotiated annually without reference to Government conciliation machinery, either federal or provincial.

In the year 1952, only about 2,100 cases of negotiations went to conciliation. Of this number, almost 1,400 cases were settled with the help of conciliation officers and, of the 718 remaining cases, only 69 eventually ended in a strike. It is of course, the 69 cases that we hear most about - these and the occasional "wildcat" or unofficial work stoppage - rather than the thousands of peacefully negotiated agreements.

This commendable record of Canadian labour and management in settling their own disputes leaves in their hands many decisions of importance to society generally.