

Labour Conditions

persons are no longer riding the buses looking for work; 10,000 persons are no longer paying rent, if they can, to housing authorities and landlords. What the economists call the multiplier effect works in reverse. If you remove 10,000 unemployed from a town or city, although you are removing 10,000 who may have been unemployed, you are going to aggravate unemployment to some extent in that particular town or city.

We in this party believe that workers should be free to move from job to job, despite what the hon. member who preceded me said near the conclusion of what was otherwise an admirable speech. The members of this party are wholeheartedly dedicated to freedom for all people, and we believe that workers should be free to move from job to job. But under present circumstances they are not free to do this because they are tied to their jobs. Their rights to pension benefits, to health insurance benefits, to sickness and accident benefits—all of these things depend upon their remaining with their employer. So they are tied to their jobs. If they leave their jobs they are threatened with the loss of accumulated benefits which may deprive them of security against any number of unforeseen contingencies. That is one of the reasons why this party has advocated a national medical care insurance plan. That is why the government of Saskatchewan introduced in that province the first medical care insurance plan in this country earlier this year. That is why this party believes in a comprehensive social security system and a system of portable pensions.

We urge upon the government that they undertake the implementation of both of these projects. We can safely say that the ground has now been broken in Saskatchewan and that it is now safe for the government to proceed with a national medical care insurance plan. We urge the government to implement a system of portable pensions at the earliest possible time. These things will do a great deal more to increase what the minister in his resolution has called labour mobility than will any kind of system designed to move workers from province to province or from industry to industry as if they were pieces on some kind of economic chess board.

We suggest to the government that not only should they consider a system of economic planning which would get to the root of the problems of unemployment and automation but that they should consider other social legislation designed to solve these problems. To economists who have studied the impact which automation has had upon employment it is apparent that we must reduce the work week. We must reduce the

citizen's working lifetime. We must encourage earlier retirement. We must educate the young people of this country not only in order to provide them with the kind of skills, training and education they need to obtain employment but simply to make sure that as many jobs as possible are available for those actually looking for them.

I suggest to the minister that the time is not too far distant when we shall no longer have a work oriented society. The hon. member who preceded me in speaking adverted to this matter. I urge the government to consider a program for workers, and by that expression I mean everyone who works for a living; and that includes people who wear white collars as well as people who wear blue collars, people who work in offices as well as people who work in factories. I urge the government to consider a program designed to meet the needs of these people when the day comes when we shall no longer have a work oriented society. This program will not create social problems so much as it will create social opportunities. Then there will be opportunities of an intellectual, cultural and vocational kind for every person in this country. Such opportunities up to this point have been available only to a fraction of our people.

We are going to support the resolution despite our misgivings about the government's failure to get a real attack mounted against the problems of unemployment and automation in this country. However, we urge the minister to keep in mind the fact that this resolution is one which will be effective only if it is part of a program of social and economic planning.

Mr. Thomas: Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to delay the committee except to make this suggestion, namely that when the proposed advisory council is set up, a representative or representatives from the agriculture industry be included. I think this whole proposal is broad enough so that the concept should not be applied only to organized labour and to management in industry. All of the people of Canada are interested in employment for Canadians. I therefore believe that when the advisory council is formed it should be representative of all classes including agriculture.

Mr. Byrne: First of all, Mr. Chairman, may I say that I should like to return a compliment to the Minister of Labour in exchange for one he handed to me yesterday. I wish to compliment him on his exercise in semantics when he introduced this resolution this afternoon. He used a large number of words. While I have not had the opportunity to read what he said when introducing the legislation