

Labour Conditions

Mr. Starr:—but I hope the committee will agree, Mr. Chairman, that it is a significant step toward its solution.

Mr. Gray: Mr. Chairman, about 200 years ago, in the midst of the great political revolution then sweeping Europe, there began another great revolution, one which we see today was perhaps more important than those political revolutions. The first industrial revolution was a great instrument of social change. Its significance lay, Mr. Chairman, not so much in the new machines that it brought into our way of life, but in the social changes which it brought into our society.

Today, Mr. Chairman, we are in the midst of a second industrial revolution, one which I suggest will have effects even more sweeping than this first industrial revolution. Our second industrial revolution, based as it is on the new principle of automation and the new technology that we have developed in the past 20 years, will have effects more significant because I suggest that its impact will be deeper and its effects will be felt more swiftly than the results of the first revolution with which we have lived over the past 200 years.

We must prepare, Mr. Chairman, to meet the social changes that are coming upon us because of this great second technological revolution. It is only in this way, by preparing to meet these changes, that we can avoid what may develop into losses of economic and political freedom. Certainly, therefore, we should welcome legislation which would put us in a position to deal with these matters before possible harmful effects will have deep-seated results on our way of life.

There is not much question, Mr. Chairman, that automation will have the effect of displacing people from jobs which they hold today. It may be too soon to tell the exact effects or results that automation is going to have, but there is no question that this displacement will take place. It may be true, as some have said, that automation will produce many other jobs in turn, but unfortunately the people whose jobs are taken away by these technological changes are often not the people who have the training and the skill to take up these new jobs. Therefore there is a great need to prepare the people whose work may be on the way to disappearing because of these technological changes so that they, along with the rest of our society, will benefit from these changes and not suffer because of them. The legislation which we bring into effect, Mr. Chairman, must be such that the burden of this technological change will not fall merely upon those people primarily affected by it. Instead, this burden is one which must be borne or supported by the whole community. This can be done only by

legislation beginning in places such as this which will muster the forces of our entire country to deal effectively with the problems of technological change.

Mr. Chairman, it is certainly difficult to comment in a detailed way upon the measures referred to by the Minister of Labour until we see the bill itself. However, I trust that we may be permitted to make some comments in a preliminary way. I was interested to hear the Minister of Labour refer to the need for co-ordination of services and the fact that, as he suggested, the measures he proposes would not overlap or compete with what we have today. I certainly will be most interested to see the actual legislation as it is presented, as I for one have some fear that, instead of the co-ordinated, organized, forward looking type of program and organization that we must have, there may be some unnecessary proliferation and overlapping of services which will have the effect of preventing us from tackling these problems in the way we must.

By way of illustration I would point out that one of the terms of reference of our productivity council is to deal with matters of this type, and apparently one of the approaches or terms of reference of our technical and vocational training act is to deal with matters of this type as well and in fact to create an advisory council on technical and vocational training. In addition, in the resolution itself we see that two other bodies are to be set up, a manpower consultation service and an advisory council on industrial change and manpower adjustments. I certainly would hope that the effect of the legislation itself, the detailed bill when it is before us, will not be such as to cause confusion and a spreading out of our effort in this regard rather than to bring about the co-ordinated and fully developed program which we must have.

The Senate committee on manpower and employment which brought down its report almost two years ago pointed out that one of the most important steps to meet the challenge of automation is to have a combination and a co-ordination of effort. It was pointed out that although much research is being done at the present time, it is spread out amongst a number of government organizations and bodies, some of them referred to by the Minister of Labour himself. This report took some pains to urge that there be a co-ordination and a bringing together of these various efforts at research so that the most important results of this research might be readily available to those so greatly concerned with this problem, not only to those inside government departments and bodies concerned but to the labour movement and to