

much less than the supply of labour. Those who possessed capital were able to choose where they would use it, while the man who possessed nothing but his labour had no choice. His family had to eat. So it is my conviction, honourable senators, that but for an accident or chance of history the situation might well have been reversed, and human beings, the men and women who make up the labour force, would have been regarded as the first and most important factor in our economic system, and capital and management as a secondary force which over the years would have been seeking to redress the balance.

However, fate decreed otherwise, and it has been the human element which has had to strive and fight for a measure of justice so they could enjoy, at least to a minor extent, what the preamble calls the fruits of progress.

The amendments dealing with technological change have not been pulled out of the air. They are in response to an insistent demand by members of the labour force for more job security, and it is interesting to note that this strong and insistent desire for such security is not confined to any one sector of the labour force. True it is more evident in industrial plants and other industries which are subject to sudden and quick technological change, yet the same kind of security is being demanded by those in what are known as the professional services, such as university professors, school teachers, and the like.

We must ask ourselves why there is now this strong and insistent demand for job security? Certainly, as it has been pointed out, a person who has spent many years at one job, and who is very skillful at it, needs and deserves all the protection which can be given to him if that job is abolished. If retraining can help, let him have the best we can offer. If early retirement with a pension is the answer, let him have it. But it should also be recognized that if a person has given most of his working years to an industry, then that industry has a moral obligation to care for him, at least in part, if his job is abolished, and the government alone should not have to bear the full responsibility. We should recognize not only that there is a strong and insistent demand for job security at the present time, but recognize and acknowledge also the reasons for it.

Many of us remember the great depression of the thirties. It was, I believe, the suffering and hardship brought on by that economic depression which was responsible for the great demand for security which resulted in our social security program. The hardship, the suffering and the distress of that time was fundamentally the result of lack of employment, and as the employment picture became brighter during and after the war the demand for job security receded. It is strong again, and I believe it is strong because of the fear of unemployment, the fear of a man that he will not be able to provide for his family. I believe the high level of unemployment, which prevents the reabsorption of displaced workers into the labour force, is one of the reasons, and perhaps the main reason, for so much labour unrest at the present time.

Honourable senators, as I believe the amendments contained in the bill will be helpful to those who may lose employment through technological change, and will not be harmful to management and industry, I support the bill. However, it will not cure or even alleviate the major cause of labour unrest. It is my profound conviction that

[Hon. Mr. Macdonald.]

the great cause of labour unrest is the fear of unemployment. Remove that fear and there will be, I believe, a long period of industrial peace and harmonious relations between labour and management, and the public. I feel it is our first and primary duty to try to remove that fear by providing employment.

• (1120)

Hon. Edward M. Lawson: Honourable senators, I think that I too will deal with the question of technological change, but before doing so it might be well to examine some of the very critical areas dealt with by this legislation that have been somewhat overlooked, as far as I can determine, by those who have preceded me in this debate.

The question was raised in the committee yesterday—and I believe there has been concern expressed in the other place in this regard—as to why we need a preamble to a bill dealing with labour relations. I was present at a meeting between representatives of labour throughout Canada and the cabinet. Concern was expressed at that meeting that nowhere in any existing labour legislation was there any acknowledgment of the existence of labour, or of its being here to stay. There are companies and industries across Canada who do not accept the philosophy that labour is here to stay. They are waiting for that magic morning when they can wake up and find that the trade union no longer exists. Strong representation was made by labour at that meeting that such a preamble be contained in labour legislation, and that the principle of labour and management having constructive labour relations should be acknowledged.

There are a number of other changes. One, in particular, deals with the somewhat overlooked blight on a number of industries, particularly the trucking industry, both interprovincial and federal. There is now provision for independent contractors or lease operators to be certified. Many people feel that that is not really a very important point, but perhaps they should be made aware of just how important it really is. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of lease operators or individual operators operating in the transportation industry across Canada. Unfortunately, heretofore they were not covered under any legislation whatsoever. Without denigrating the free enterprise system, many of these lease operators were gypsters of the worst form. It was not unusual to find that they were driving 15, 18 or 20 hours a day, and when they became too tired to carry on they would take pep pills or wide-awake pills or no-doze pills so that they could continue to operate on the highways. It should give you little comfort to know that the huge semi-trailer or tractor trailer coming down the highway may be driven by a lease operator or an owner-operator, half awake or half asleep and filled with pep pills so that he can operate, with no regulation or control on the number of hours he may work, and no supervision as to the condition of his vehicle. No regulations prior to the Canada Labour (Safety) Code governed this type of individual whatsoever.

I do not suggest that this is a cure-all, but if it makes provision for lease operators to be certified and governed by collective agreement, and—perhaps even more important from the legitimate operator's point of view—to be made to compete fairly in that they have to meet certain