

*The Address—Mr. Murphy*

While it is true that an employer may have little or no control over other causes of industrial conversion, it is equally true that the same employer does have control over industrial conversion by way of automation. It is in this area that I feel the employer should, by law, be required to negotiate with the union on matters pertaining to retraining, relocation, income maintenance, severance pay, early retirement and similar types of assistance that will provide some type of relief for those employees who will be dislocated as a result of automation. And I believe that such negotiation should be made mandatory, even though the changes to be made are to take effect at a time when a collective agreement is in force, whether or not such agreement has provided for the possibility of job-reducing changes.

I agree that automation has a vital role to play if our Canadian economy is to remain dynamic. The Woods task force report properly points out that to society as a whole, change is the key to the increased productivity necessary to meet unsatisfied public needs and desires and, to individual enterprises, change is essential to remain sufficiently competitive to survive. As the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg) so aptly put it on Tuesday night, "the name of the game is change."

However, Mr. Speaker, industrial change by way of automation despite its obvious advantages cannot be allowed to run rampant without regard to the hardships to displaced workers which must necessarily follow in its path. The fact that the introduction of an automated manufacturing process will benefit not only his employer but also his fellow workers, and even Canadian society as a whole, provides little comfort to the man whose job has been eliminated by a machine. He will say, as I would if confronted with the same plight, "Good for you, but what about me"?

As representatives of Canadian society, we must answer that man's question. He is afraid, and justifiably so. We must act to allay that fear, and any action we take can be justified on both economic and social grounds. Economically, it makes sense to take steps to prevent the natural resistance to any form of change which can result from such fear. Socially, a truly just society cannot tolerate a situation which permits the majority, who will receive the benefit of change, to demand that the minority bear the burdens of that change.

[Mr. Murphy.]

• (3:40 p.m.)

I am agonizingly aware that the proposal I have made does not provide a complete answer to the haunting question of the displaced worker. My suggestion, if acted upon, would help only those workers who are covered by collective bargaining and collective bargaining covers less than half the labour force. Furthermore, it affords no protection to those workers who find themselves adversely affected by industrial changes resulting from causes other than automation. If one were to suggest answers to the questions which will be asked by these people, it would require much more time than is available to me today.

I am also aware, Mr. Speaker, that the proposal which I now make for alleviation of the hardships resulting from automation is not as extreme as other proposals I once supported. I am sure I will be reminded of that fact by my good friends who are members of United Steel Workers Local 2251 in Sault Ste. Marie. I once endorsed the position taken in the Freedman report with reference to this issue. My change in position has been the result of three separate influential factors.

First, the alarming increase in the number of strikes and the resultant irreparable damage to the economy of our country has caused me to have second thoughts about any proposal which would provide even more opportunities for strikes. I can see no justification for providing ways and means of disrupting the economic stability which we have come to expect once a collective agreement has been signed. It would be tantamount to providing warring nations with an endless supply of arms to do so.

Secondly, I have come to realize that collective bargaining, despite its many virtues, cannot by itself create jobs and this function should not be demanded of it. At best it provides a means for preserving obsolete jobs by sanctioning unnecessary work practices, or it shuffles job holders around by adopting such things as early retirement plans which induce older workers to retire to make room for the younger men entering the labour force. But jobs it does not create, and to think otherwise is to lull oneself into a state of delusion.

Finally, Freedman's proposals in this field became less appealing to me as I became increasingly aware of the economic Council's admonition that Canada must be vitally concerned with improving its industrial efficiency. In order to survive as a nation, we must