

However, there is one most vital factor here that none of us can afford to lose sight of - and that is the worker.

If we must adapt, then this adaption to newer methods must be made with as many safeguards and as much security as possible for our most important resource - our people - our workers and their families.

Today, we in Canada are deeply involved in this many-sided problem. I say many-sided because - to the worker - it involves such matters as job security, retention of union seniority, job reclassification, retraining, upgrading and, in some instances, re-location of displaced workers.

As automation is affecting almost every segment of every industry and commercial enterprise, I believe that this problem has become one of utmost national importance. It calls for the concerted efforts of governments, industry and unions to confront it together.

LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

In my Department of Labour, we have been strongly encouraging management and unions to discuss together and find solutions for these problems brought about by technological change, before any action is taken.

As Minister of Labour, I should prefer to see such voluntary joint consultation, between unions and management, carried out on a continuing basis rather than waiting for a potential crisis....

In my opinion, it is no longer feasible for unions and management to meet only to negotiate contracts. With so many changes coming rapidly, it is impossible to build all the necessary safeguards, for future unknowns, into a two or a three-year agreement. Therefore, I should like to see unions and management, everywhere, agree to meet on a regular basis to discuss present-day problems and possible future changes....

I am proud to say that Canada had the world's first federal government department dedicated completely to labour-management relations and to labour legislation. It was formed in 1900....

During the Second World War, to improve production of essential war goods, our Department of Labour set up a system of voluntary union-management committees in industry. From these has grown our Labour-Management Consultation Branch, servicing such committees in all types of industry representing more than 620,000 union members.

It is a matter of considerable pride for me, as Minister of Labour, to be able to say that, in this field of union-management consultation, Canada is again a leader with the greatest number of such committees, *per capita*, in the world....

As you are well aware, the railway unions were among the first to undertake joint consultation with management, as early as 1921. I recognize that such consultation was, to a large extent, concerned with safe working conditions, and there are some who feel that this form of consultation is not suitable for

dealing with major issues in the labour-management field. However, the Canada Department of Labour is of the opinion that labour-management joint consultation committees can make a very real and worthwhile contribution to current labour-management relations.

We have not changed our opinion in any way on the desirability of free collective bargaining, but because of the tremendous complexity of the problems arising out of technological change - and the rapidity of such change - it seems obvious to us that some form of continuous consultation must be encouraged. Since there are more than 2,000 labour-management joint consultation committees in existence in Canada (114 of them in the Canadian railways alone), it seems equally obvious to us that we should promote the idea of continual consultation by this route....

LABOUR STANDARDS AND SAFETY

...I should like to touch briefly on the Canada Labour (Standards) Code which was brought into being just a little more than a year ago. This Code ensures a reasonable minimum hourly wage, maximum hours of work, overtime pay and paid holidays for all workers under federal jurisdiction, including all those employed in the railway, highway transport, telegraph and telephone, radio, television, air-transport industries....

In the case of hours, where difficult adjustments are involved, many more employers have applied for temporary deferments, and, in dealing with these deferment requests on hours of work, I am trying to avoid any serious loss of take-home pay for the workers or sharply increased costs for the employers, by having the parties directly involved in each industry, work out a practical accommodation to the requirements of the Code within a reasonable period of time....

Another section of our Labour Code was introduced during the current session of Parliament. This will be known as the Canada Labour (Safety) Code and will apply to all industries covered by the Canada Labour (Standards) Code.

This new legislation will complement safety regulations already in force with respect to the operation of railways, ships and aircraft. It will apply, for example, to their workshops, maintenance of way, and other sections of these, and other industries, which, as Canadians present realize, have not been covered by federal safety legislation....

The union movement has sought for, fought for and accomplished much. In Canada, we now have unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, safety legislation, many types of factory inspection, maximum hours of work, minimum rates of pay, vacation and holiday rights, full recognition of unions and their rights to collective bargaining. But what of tomorrow? What will we do over the next 30 years to match the achievements of the past 30? It is up to all of us, labour, management, government....

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