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LABOUR DAY MESSAGE-1960

The following Labour Day message was issued by Mr. Starr, the Minister of Labour, to "the working people of Canada":

"...It is traditional on Labour Day to look back over the years and assess the progress made in bettering the working and living conditions of all Canadians, and recall the vital role labour has played in such progress.

"At this time all of us are conscious of the remarkable strides made in recent years in the improvement of rates of pay, reduced working hours, shortened work week, annual holidays with pay, retirement pension plans and a variety of social welfare programmes. We are also very much aware of the great improvements which have been made in the physical arrangement and design of modern plant and equipment resulting in healthier and less hazardous working conditions.

CHANGING OCCUPATION PATTERNS

"With these advances, new problems have emerged--not the least of which have been those associated with the widespread changes in the Canadian occupational pattern. To appreciate something of the extent of these changes in the pattern of employment we have only to look at the revolution in agriculture which has seen farm production rise to record levels over the past years while at the same time 400,000 farm workers were able to leave the farm for other industries.

"Obviously the increased output per man that has been taking place in other industries

too in recent times would have been impossible without increased efficiency deriving from the imaginative use of better machines and the improved skill and knowledge of the men producing and operating these machines. We know as well that the introduction of new and better machines must continue if our products are to remain competitive and our standard of living is to continue to improve.

"The greater use of machines and of our technological improvements had tended to increase the proportion of professional, technical and skilled occupations as compared with unskilled and semi-skilled occupations. The latter groups now represent only 30 per cent of the jobs in the economy and this trend has been accelerating in recent years.

PROBLEM OF TRAINING

"When this is considered in the light of the following facts--that the high birth-rate of the Forties will mean record-breaking numbers of young people coming into the labour force during the next few years, that two out of three of our young people are leaving school before obtaining their junior matriculation, thereby restricting themselves to a large extent to competing for the diminishing supply of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, and that relatively few Canadian employers have well-developed training programmes to further train youth entering the labour force--we see a problem of serious proportion facing Canada.