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LABOUR PROBLEMS IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

The following is part of a recent address by Mr. John R. Nicholson, Minister of Labour, to the thirty-fifth Regular Convention of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees in Montreal:

...For the benefit of our American visitors, let me spend a moment reviewing Canada's position in the world today.

Compared to your 200 million people, Canada has a population of only 20 million. Yet these 20 million have brought our country into world prominence in many areas.

In the processing of natural resources, we are the second largest producer of gold in the world, we supply 80 per cent of the free world's nickel, and 37 per cent of the free world's uranium. I might add that we also rank high in production of such other minerals as iron ore, copper and asbestos.

In fact, it was our iron-ore riches in the Labrador-Ungava region that led to one of the best examples of continuing Canadian-American co-operation. In order to get this iron ore, as economically as possible, to both American and Canadian steel mills, the St. Lawrence Seaway had to be built so the mighty ore-carriers could travel up the St. Lawrence River into the Great Lakes. I don't have to tell any of you how vital that Seaway is today to the economy of both the United States and Canada.

And American needs have helped Canada in other ways. We produce well over 40 per cent of the world's newsprint, while your country imports, for her own needs, more than 80 per cent of this production.

You can understand how important our natural resources are to Canada's growth when I tell you that about 55 per cent of all our merchandise exports

are derived from products based on our forests, mines and water resources. So, it should come as no surprise to learn that last year we spent approximately \$2.5 billion in new resources facilities....

As in the United States, we, in Canada, are mounting intensive and extensive campaigns to wipe out poverty and raise the standards of our more unfortunate people through special educational and job-training programmes, as well as assisting workers and their families in moving to suitable jobs and work areas.

As much as this is of vital importance, we are just as concerned with the people now gainfully employed.

Governments, industries and unions, in both our countries, are currently faced with immense problems never even envisaged by our fathers. We are faced with technological and scientific advances which have changed our whole conception of work.

NEW WORK METHODS

In my opinion, we are now on the threshold of what might, in time, be known to the historians as "the technological revolution". Continual breakthroughs in the sciences, and particularly in the field of electronics, are changing work methods and techniques much faster than we can adapt our social philosophies.

But adapt we must. We must accept these new work conceptions in order to retain and increase our competitive status in the world markets. Unless we can produce with both quality and efficiency, we stand to lose all those higher standards of living and security that we have all worked so hard to gain.