

occasions in connection with the St. Lawrence seaway project.

The competence of the Minister of Transport is well known, but at the risk of offending his modesty, I must say that the brilliant outline he has made on several occasions of the St. Lawrence seaway project has brought much comfort to all those who have our country's development at heart.

The people of Beauharnois, Salaberry de Valleyfield and of the whole constituency are deeply interested in the seaway project because of the advantages which everyone, in his own sphere, would derive from this undertaking. Everyone favours and takes a keen interest in the vast project related to the deepening of our mighty St. Lawrence river.

The Beauharnois plant supplies power to an unlimited number of factories of every description. Beauharnois county has made a fine name for itself and is justly proud of the success achieved by a few of its sons in literature, fine arts, science and even sports. In the field of science, one of our citizens has gained recognition not only in Canada but abroad.

As regards social relations, employers and employees work in a spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding. In this connection, the workers have shown themselves well disposed; they are also very efficiently organized and enjoy, in this respect, every privilege granted by the established statutes. On the other hand, industrial leaders have shown a fine spirit of initiative where their employees' welfare is at stake. Undoubtedly, some claims are necessary and, at times, disputes did arise, but no regrettable incident has ever occurred and relations between salaried workers and industrial leaders were renewed on a harmonious basis. I have no doubt that these industrialists would be the first to press for the necessary measures if ever the government required of them a united effort for the common good. I am sure that the industrialists of Valleyfield, of Beauharnois and of other parts of my constituency would be the first to meet the wishes of the government in this respect.

(Text):

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of the house to a social problem which I encountered very frequently during my four years as mayor of the city of Valleyfield, and also while acting as director and vice-president of the union of municipalities for the province of Quebec. Until a few months ago this social problem was urgent, but because of recent international events

it has become for the moment less pressing. This problem is of concern to one of every three workers in Canada.

I am referring to all Canadian workers over forty, whose plight can be appreciated by even a cursory examination of the advertisements in any of our daily newspapers. In recent years it has been in the field of labour that the most severe economic losses have been suffered. Loss in the field of employment is always an obstacle which hinders progress toward other objectives. Thus it is important to solve first the problem of employment if we are to lead the way to a progressive economy. Both nationally and internationally, unemployment is a waste of productive resources. Indeed, when a section of labour is inactive, both production and revenue are lower than if there were employment for all.

Since the 1930's everyone who has the welfare of the workers at heart must be deeply concerned about the ever-increasing tendency to discriminate against those over forty-five. Except in skilled occupations the older worker who does not retain his employment is faced with much greater difficulty in finding new employment. This was proved during the depression, when the numbers of unemployed older workers increased. The war demand for labour of necessity did away with much of this discrimination. It also showed that the prejudice was not based upon the fact that the older worker did not do his work satisfactorily. Nevertheless, once the war was over the older worker in North America was found in greater numbers among the unemployed.

Some employers would have us believe that these workers are the inevitable victims of the machine age and the modern accent on youth. The entrance of ex-service personnel into the labour market has sometimes been used to justify or excuse such discrimination, which is often practised against veterans in that age group. Post-war demands all over Canada for manufactured goods and building materials were such that all workers were needed and should have been employed.

A moment ago I stated that the problem is an urgent one. In order to prove my assertion as to its gravity, one has only to consult the statistics issued by the officials of the national employment service. Vocational guidance and employment counselling are absolutely essential. This is not a mere expression of personal opinion; it is the considered opinion of those of the international labour office whose business it is to study the