

when he discussed the subject—made the following statement on page 1980 of Hansard of that year:

There is need for society to assist in the protection of its members against a condition which simultaneously places burdens upon the workers whose day's work is done, and on the worker whose day's work is just beginning. If the young are to be given a fair start in life the care of the aged should not be their first responsibility.

In my own province of British Columbia, as I believe in others, before they can obtain an old age pension under the provincial regulations, parents are compelled to sue their children, even though they know that those children are unable to contribute to their support.

Because of economic changes it is becoming increasingly difficult for people getting up in years to find employment. Indeed, it is not only difficult for them to find employment; it is difficult for them to keep it when they have it. That power production and the use of machinery displace man-power is no longer disputed. The extent to which employment lags behind increased production in all countries to-day clearly demonstrates that fact. There is, however, another point that is not so well known and that is that power-driven machinery not only displaces workers in industry but also reduces the quality of the labour which is left. In other words, power-driven machine production not only reduces the aggregate number of workers in industry but displaces a number of skilled and experienced workers by a smaller number of unskilled workers. Both these points were brought out clearly in the evidence given before the Turgeon textile commission in 1936. One witness, Mr. W. J. Whitehead, of Associated Textiles of Canada, Limited, gave the following evidence as reported at page 1081:

Q. So that we come to the conclusion that since 1928 the proportion of labour in the output of the company has been reduced from about 32 per cent to 20 per cent?

A. I have agreed to that.

Q. Now I suggest to you that your rates of wages are much lower now than they were in 1928?

A. We have not denied that.

If the rate of wages is lower and production is higher with a smaller number of employees, then there is bound to be some economic dislocation and there are bound to be a number of people who cannot be looked after, people who cannot obtain income direct from industry. If they cannot get an income direct from industry there is no other source from which

[Mr. MacInnis.]

they can get it, unless it is provided by the state; and the state can get it only by taxing it out of industry.

In the brief submitted by counsel for the commission, we find the following:

The industry is responsible for those conditions. In its evolution it has enhanced the number of low positions to the detriment of the higher ones. Some years ago, each one hundred looms occupied ten weavers with few or no helpers. To-day the same number of looms occupies two weavers, three battery-hands and one oil-cleaner, perhaps two. Eight major jobs were replaced by four or five minor ones.

This substantial evidence goes to prove the point I have just made, namely, that machinery not only displaces workers, but also displaces skilled and experienced workers for mere machine-tenders. In other words, more products are turned out with fewer and cheaper labourers.

Let me quote one other statement from the same source. This is taken from the brief submitted by Elie Beauregard, one of counsel for the commission. From page 130 I quote the following:

The large Wabasso factory, which is no exception, succeeded between 1928 and 1936, in more than doubling its production, while reducing the number of its workers by about one-fourth and its payroll by about one-third.

If the Minister of Finance is at a loss to know where to get money, that should suggest where it can be had. This is not a condition that is peculiar to the textile industry; it is more or less true of all industries in which power machinery is used. Perhaps the textile industry was more ruthless or had more and better opportunities of doing as it pleased. I do not know; I am merely quoting these cases to show the unmistakable trend in industry to-day, a development that is making it increasingly difficult for people of forty and forty-five—not people of sixty, and sixty-five and seventy, but people of forty and forty-five—to get a footing in industry and to keep it when they have got it.

Let me give another quotation from the chief counsel. In his brief to the same commission he makes this statement at page 7:

More often than not when the worker has reached the forties a forced lay-off, through fatigue or illness means the end of his employment.

He may leave the factory because of a cold, because of some slight indisposition, but he is getting up in years and is no longer as agile as he once was, and what industry needs to-day is not the skilled worker but the agile machine-tender.

The last to be called when the men go back to work and the first to be released or put on short time the old employee who has not known how to make himself indispensable falls victim,