

*Labour Conditions*

change composed of experts from management, labour, government and universities to guide a research program on the manpower effects of technological change in Canada. This research has gone forward vigorously and has concentrated on a number of manufacturing industries, on railway transportation and on the introduction of electronic computers in offices. The findings of this important research have guided us in the formulation of this legislation. It is soundly based on the facts of industrial change and their consequences for manpower adjustment. The findings of this research might be highlighted as follows. The average worker in our labour force today cannot expect to remain in a single occupation with a given set of skills for most of his working life. Unlike his father or his grandfather he will have to make many adjustments to new skill and knowledge demands and on occasion even shift to completely new occupations, usually at higher levels of skills.

This means that a more flexible and adaptive approach to technical education and training must be developed. Skills cannot be allowed to become out of date in the face of ever-changing manpower demands and thus act as a brake on individual growth and on our economic progress. Nor can we allow the human dislocations imposed by lay-offs as a result of industrial change to create a steadily increasing burden on unemployment insurance and other forms of social assistance.

This legislation is designed to provide a preventive approach to such unemployment. It goes to its source, and helps to ensure that efforts will be made to re-employ, productively, workers who are displaced by industrial change. Old jobs are disappearing and new ones are being created every day. We must make sure that as many displaced workers as possible are equipped to take these new jobs.

Canada's requirements for highly skilled manpower are being met increasingly under the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act of 1960 through the facilities and the programs developed to meet this need. This new legislation will complement the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act in an important way with respect to adult employed workers.

There is a broad need throughout Canadian industries to match occupational supplies and demands. Today, for example, there exist manpower shortages in skilled and technical occupations which limit potential increases of production, raise costs, and limit the expansion of employment.

Manpower adjustments of the kind which this legislation is intended to facilitate are

essential if technological change is to play its necessary part in increasing the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian industry. It is vitally necessary to ensure that this objective is achieved with a minimum of displacement and other human dislocation. As I have said before in this house, and as the national productivity council mission to Europe last summer has urged in its report, new patterns of labour-management-government consultation and co-operation must be developed if we are to meet these objectives effectively.

This legislation is designed to ensure that these human consequences are minimized and that positive measures are co-operatively taken by labour and management to bring about as smoothly as possible the manpower adjustments required by automation and industrial change.

The legislation is founded on a number of basic principles which the government feels are fundamental. First, it is based on the principle that a co-operative and joint approach by unions and management to developing research and plans for dealing with the effects of industrial change is the most effective one. The government is prepared to assist financially and through consultation if the parties in industry voluntarily wish the government to do so. The primary responsibility, however, remains with labour and management for working out the ways, at the plant and industry level, in which displaced workers can be most effectively adapted to new employment. Government facilities and assistance are brought into play at their request. The legislation will give labour and management a chance to sit down together and assess the situation. It will then encourage them to determine the facts, with assistance if this is desired from the government. It will encourage them to decide jointly and in their mutual interest on a course of remedial action.

In essence, then, the legislation will serve as a practical step to bring about effective labour-management-government co-operation. Members of the house will agree, I hope, that this is a highly desirable objective, and that this legislation will provide sound opportunities for the development of such co-operation.

A second important principle of the legislation is that steps must be developed well in advance of worker displacement resulting from industrial change, if effective measures are to be brought into operation so as to minimize unemployment and other human dislocations. In addition, many of these steps have to be taken in industry at the factory or establishment level, and the legislation provides for this.