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THE CHALLENGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

The following is a partial text of an address by the Minister of Labour, Mr. Michael Starr, to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in Washington, D.C. on September 18:

"...Both in Canada and the United States today, a major effort of Government is directed to increasing growth in the economic field. In the United States you are taking measures to advance your rate of economic growth. In Canada we are doing the same thing....

"Automation remains the number one problem in industry today. When we talk about automation, we are not merely talking about the replacement of men by machines. We are talking about the whole field of technological change - the adoption of new processes, new materials, new techniques that tremendously augment our capacity to produce but at the same time require the use of fewer hands.

"There is no doubt about our capacity to produce. The problem is to produce at costs that will make our goods competitive in the markets of the world. This problem is particularly acute in Canada, where we have a small home market, too small by itself to promote the economies of large-scale production.

"You would think that, with a population of 18,000,000, automation would not be a problem. But it is no less a problem in Canada than in the United States. All these things are relative.

"And productivity is a problem. What we mean by productivity is not merely increasing production

per man or per worker, but producing at a price that the maximum number of people can afford to pay.

TRAINING THE DISPLACED WORKER

"Automation must be able to assist in achieving this advance and at the same time to maintain a reasonable wage level. Those who are displaced by automation must be trained for new jobs. In simple terms, this means that we must create enough new jobs each year to take care of the increase in the labour force and the number of those who are displaced by automation and other causes. In Canada, this has been estimated at 200,000 new jobs a year....

"In Canada and, above all, in the United States, an infinite variety of new jobs and new types of jobs have come into being in the last few years as a result of technological change, jobs that did not even exist a few years ago. In electronics, in communications, in transportation, in broadcasting, vast new fields of opportunity have opened up.

"The problem has been, of course, to find the skilled and trained people to fill these jobs. The other problems has been to create enough new jobs to take care of those who have been displaced by these advances. In order to provide new training, we have embarked in Canada upon a massive programme of vocational-school building, which has seen the construction of some 200 new institutes undertaken in a period of approximately 18 months.