

Labour Conditions

this increase in consumption among all Canadians that we will be able to say that we have improved the situation in this country.

In a few years, all countries of the world will have to consider the problems from that angle, because as a result of the increase in production facilities, they will be able to overproduce, and at that time, if our concepts have not been readjusted and if our finished products cannot be better distributed, we shall probably be faced with the greatest catastrophe the world has ever known. We will also show evidence of the greatest inconsistency ever known since the beginning of this world, that is the inconsistency of having an accumulation of all our consumer goods and services, without having increased consumption possibilities. We shall then see production accumulate before the eyes of a people who will be unable to get hold of that production which, however, will have been intended and produced for them. That will be the inconsistency which all the peoples of the world will have to face.

Mr. Chairman, I think I should close my remarks at this stage, and I would ask all hon. members to consider the various points of view I have expressed. If my modest contribution to this debate has been of any help, I shall be very happy.

(Text):

Mr. Berger: Mr. Chairman, the members of the New Democratic party were happy to see this resolution on the order paper and are happier to see it now before the committee, because it provides some evidence that the government is going to do something about unemployment and automation. As the Minister of Labour well knows, we have taken the position that the government has done far too little about these problems since June 18. The resolution offers two measures which may be useful in mitigating the increasing unemployment which technology and automation have left in their wake. The resolution is worded in a rather vague manner, but from what is said in it and from what the minister told us today I think we can take it that there are two essential elements to the resolution. First of all, it offers assessment incentives to industry to encourage industry to carry out manpower adjustment programs; second, it promises payments to workers to encourage them to move to areas where jobs are available.

Let us keep in mind, Mr. Chairman, that measures like this by themselves are not adequate because they only deal with the plight of the worker after changing economic conditions, technology and automation, have deprived him of his job. If these are the only measures the government is prepared to take, we will get nowhere. What is required is a willingness to plan the country's economic future; to intervene at every stage, if that is necessary, in order to provide jobs and security for all Canadians. If we are to make sure that none of our citizens suffer from unemployment we must plan our economy with that in mind. We ought to be prepared to regulate investment, to regulate the location of industry, to regulate the development of new products. It is not quite good enough simply to say that the federal government will intervene after all these decisions relating to investment, relating to the location of industry and relating to the development of new products have already been taken by the leaders at the top echelons of industry and business. It is not good enough, after all these things have been left in private hands, after all these important decisions have been made by people who are not responsible to the country itself, at that stage to encourage business and industry to embark upon a program of manpower adjustment and to encourage workers who have been deprived of their jobs to move to areas where jobs are available. Measures such as those contained in the resolution are useful, but they do not get to the root of the problem.

The real problem is one of economic disorder, and in the view of the members of this party it will not be sufficient to offer measures such as those contained in this resolution without getting to the root of the trouble. That can be done only by embarking on a program of economic planning. When I said that those who are making the major economic decisions in this country today are not responsible, I meant they are not responsible to the people who work for them, to the people who buy their products or to those who work in small businesses connected with industry and who are not privy to the decisions made in the top echelons. In this sense we have an economic situation where the important decisions are made by people who bear no responsibility to outside bodies for what they do. I think it is legitimate to make this criticism while bearing no enmity whatsoever toward those who in present circumstances are able to make decisions which affect the welfare of each one of us. We believe we ought to have something to say about those decisions.