

Labour Conditions

against the machine. It must be clearly established whether the use of the machine must punish men or whether the machine must serve them.

These two different approaches to the problem are altogether different.

If the machine has been invented to punish men, let us continue to procrastinate as we are now doing. If the machine must serve men, let us consider the problem from that angle.

The government is suggesting a minimum wage of \$1.25 per hour. I would say to the Minister of Labour that he should guarantee, not only a minimum wage, but a minimum income to all Canadian workers, to all Canadians without exception, so that they may have enough purchasing power to buy the products made by the machines.

We have two solutions before us: On the one hand, socialism, which would like men to serve the machine; on the other hand, private enterprise or social credit, if you prefer, would like the machine to serve men. There is a world of difference between the two.

The first system, we see in operation some periods of the year, for instance, during the winter works period. The Minister of Labour is perfectly aware of what I mean. In wintertime we pay for winter works and, in my area, the federal government has set 60 per cent of manpower as its contribution and the provincial government pays 40 per cent; municipalities and unorganized parishes do not have to pay for that much.

In wintertime when the weather is extremely cold we put machines away and force men to work in temperatures of 40 or 50 degrees below zero. Why? For employment under the winter works act.

Then, we see machines, steam shovels left idle in warehouses. Mechanical arms are at rest while human arms must work to earn what the government agrees to pay.

Mr. Speaker, we are told that automation must be put at the service of mankind. Is that what we do during the wintertime?

The Minister of Labour would be logical in introducing this bill if he said to us: "We will purchase the products of those machines and let the people of Canada enjoy them."

Why punish men with machines? Why tolerate unemployment because men have been replaced by machines? Why not say that we will make it possible for men to benefit from the work done by machines?

It seems to me that would be more social, more humane and more Christian than to set the machines aside and keep men working in wintertime regardless of time or place.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of minimum wages will not matter much if men are replaced by machines.

What does the minister suggest to help the men and women who are thus replaced at work?

The government is aware that at present in federal services, certain equipment is not being used so as to prevent the lay-off of employees with 15 or 20 years of service, of experienced civil servants in government employ for 20 or 25 years. Since it is not the intention to replace them by modern equipment, this is another refusal to make man benefit from scientific progress.

The human being is considered to be like a beast of burden instead of a superior being who must be subjected all those inventions and automatic equipment available today.

Whether minimum wages be of \$1.25 instead of \$1.50 matters little to those who do not earn any wages. It matters little, as was pointed out yesterday by my colleague from Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire), to a man who now works 48 hours a week at \$1 per hour, if he works 40 hours at \$1.25, since he will earn the same salary. That will not improve his living conditions. So, if I were minister of labour, after the minimum wages I would have added a minimum income for each Canadian. Any person living in Canada is entitled to his share of the national wealth. In my opinion, it is time we passed legislation aimed at respecting the existence of each and every individual person living in Canada.

We also talk of annual leave, of legal holidays in federal works, undertakings or businesses, and here I refer to paragraph (f) in clause 2 of Bill No. C-126, which reads:

"general holiday" means New Year's day, Good Friday, Victoria day, Dominion day, Labour day, Thanksgiving day and Christmas day and includes any day substituted for any such holiday pursuant to section 28.

For what reason did the Minister of Labour not include in that paragraph what we adopted on division, almost unanimously last Friday night, according to the 14th report of the committee on procedure and organization:

2.(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of this standing order, and unless otherwise ordered, the house shall not sit on any of the following days: New Year's day, Good Friday, the day fixed for the celebration of the birthday of the