man or woman in our work force finds himself or herself in work sharing for the rest of his or her working life. That to me is a very dangerous prospect. Surely we should devote our attention not to providing work sharing or a reduced work week for a very able worker but to providing full time jobs. That should be our challenge. When we start talking about putting work sharing into legislation, I become extremely concerned that we are losing sight of the fact that work sharing initiatives are merely of a temporary nature to deal with, admittedly, a serious problem but hopefully a very short-term one.

I may be over optimistic in saying that. But I want my colleagues in the NDP to understand that I have a serious concern about legislation in those two areas, particularly to use the words of the motion "flexible work arrangements."

We often lose sight about the federal influence in this area, which I think is somewhat less than 10 per cent of the work force—somewhere between 5 per cent and 10 per cent, under the Canada Labour Code. I admit that federal legislation may serve as a model for other jurisdictions and may have some value in that sense. To believe we are going to address the very serious problems with which we are faced in terms of productivity, unemployment and technological change by amending the Canada Labour Code is, to use a popular expression, to rêvez en couleur. I note the Parliamentary Secretary was quick to grasp the significance of that point.

While the motion has, in my view, serious flaws, both technically and substantively, let me proceed to address some of the legitimate and serious issues it does raise. It raises them with respect to unemployment. None of us are so insensitive as to realize the economic and social cost and horror of that. The motion deals with technological change as well. The danger in my view, however, is leaping too quickly to link the two issues inextricably. In terms of the U.S. experience, Jerome Mark, the Assistant Commissioner for technological change at the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, has this to say:

> When computers were first introduced for office data applications, predictions were made that large numbers of clerical and kindred workers would be displaced; and job opportunities for millions of people in what was one of the largest occupational employment categories would be curtailed. What actually did happen was quite different. In 1960, clerical workers amounted to about 10 million workers and accounted for 15 per cent of total U.S. employment. By 1978, they increased to about 17 million workers, and accounted for 18 per cent of total U.S. employment. Thus, instead of clerical workers' employment decreasing because of the introduction of the computer as had been predicted, employment actually increased 73 per cent between 1960 and 1978. Clerical employment is likely to continue to increase significantly to 1985.

One cannot ignore the problem in terms of technological displacement of workers, but one should not jump too quickly to the conclusion that robots, high technology of all sorts, is automatically going to increase in the displacement of workers. Certainly it will cause some jobs to be lost, there is no question of that, but I hope only a minimum will be affected. It will also cause some skills to become redundant. I also believe it will create many new jobs to replace them. What we are experiencing now is job losses due to lack of competitiveness. In Canada, according to my information, we have about 700 robots. They alone cannot be held responsible for the 592,000 jobs lost in the manufacturing sector during the recession. We must adapt new technologies which will allow us to become competitive in world markets to improve our productivity.

There is the narrow issue of the Canada Labour Code. It is here and not in the budget that I think the first three points of today's motion should be directed, and I would like to deal briefly with those parts of the Code, Sections 149 to 153. The existing standard is basically that any employer who proposes to affect a technological change that is likely to affect the terms and conditions or security of employment of a significant number of employees shall give notice of the proposed change to the bargaining agent at least 90 days in advance. There is a procedure to follow. As a matter of fact, when a provision exists for technological change issues within the collective agreement, the Labour Code stipulations do not apply. Only Saskatchewan, Manitoba and B.C. have legislation mandating advance notification.

I see a number of problems. To ignore them I think would be to ignore reality. One might very well ask, are current provisions too vague? Is the definition of technological change too narrow in that it does not cover all types of changes in the manner in which work is carried out which may be the result of a new technology? The second question we have to ask ourselves, and I do not know the answer to this but I think we should ask the question, is: Are unions asked to prove too much before being able to activate the process for renewal of bargaining, because now they must show that the employer plans to introduce new equipment or material, and that there will be a change in the manner in which work is carried out, and that particular change is directly related to the introduction of new equipment?

I think a third question we have to ask with respect to the Code are whether phrases like "substantially and adversely affect" or "significant numbers of employees" are too ambiguous to allow the affected parties to determine whether notification is necessary.

I believe another legitimate question is: Is the 90 day clause too short? That is certainly the position of some people in the House. That is a very difficult question to answer. I would think that that provision would suit very well a modest sized company in, say, the auto parts business employing 25 people in a plant. But to compare that with General Motors with thousands in its plant and to have the same number of days apply as a minimum really begs reality as the two situations are so dramatically different.

Finally, the question we have to ask about the Code is: Should employers be required to provide sufficiently well detailed information and, in any case, are the standards too vague? There are a number of very legitimate questions we should ask ourselves with respect to the Canada Labour Code and not the budgetary provisions.

• (1730)

Because I have about a minute and a half remaining, I will have to confine myself in summation to saying that I acknowledge that my comments about the Code deal with a very