



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 53/18

POST-WAR TRENDS IN LABOUR-MANAGEMENT
RELATIONS

Text of an address delivered by the Minister of Labour, Mr. Milton F. Gregg, to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton, Ont.

It is fashionable, these days, for speakers to talk about the tremendous expansion taking place in Canada today. It is fashionable to talk in glowing terms on our prospects for the future.

We Canadians are not an excitable people, and not prone to throw caution to the winds. It is not our nature to become over-confident and over-expansive. For these reasons, it is perhaps safe for us to listen to a certain amount of enthusiastic comment and even flattery about our nation.

Nevertheless, the theme of Canada's industrial greatness may perhaps be getting overworked, and I hasten to assure you that all I intend to do tonight is to make merely passing reference to it.

This is necessary, since it would be unrealistic for me to discuss labour-management relations in the post-war period as something separate from the general economic position of our country. Labour-management relations are intimately tied in with economic conditions.

The first point I would make tonight is that labour-management relations in the post-war period have developed almost entirely under very favourable economic circumstances. Pronounced gains in working and living conditions have been possible and have come to be taken as a matter of course.

Thus the initial reaction of most Canadians to the evolving collective bargaining experiences has been favourable. It is in broader terms, however, that the success of these experiences must be judged.

Collective bargaining is a focal point for three sets of needs: first, labour's natural desire to work under favourable conditions and to achieve a better standard of living; second, the employer's need to conduct his business efficiently, and in keeping with the economic realities of the industry in which he is engaged; and, third, the over-all interests of the Canadian people, which include the need to maintain uninterrupted production to enable a steady flow of goods and services, - the need to develop our resources in keeping with our aspirations as a nation, and the need to be strong at home, and to be able to play our role effectively on the international scene.