



Ontario

Ministry of
Labour

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY
THE HON. BETTE STEPHENSON, M.D.
MINISTER OF LABOUR
TO THE CANADIAN CLUB
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"EVEN IN THE MEANEST SORTS OF LABOUR, THE WHOLE SOUL OF MAN IS COMPOSED INTO A KIND OF REAL HARMONY THE INSTANT HE SETS HIMSELF TO WORK."

THE MOTIVATION FOR THOMAS CARLYLE'S STATEMENT MAY BE SOMEWHAT SUSPECT TODAY, CONSIDERING THE ABOMINABLE CONDITIONS WORKERS ENDURED IN THE 19TH CENTURY.

PERHAPS, THIS, FROM MICHAEL ARGYLE, A CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIST, IS MORE PALATABLE: "THE PATTERNS OF WORK BEHAVIOUR IN A PARTICULAR SPECIES ARE LARGELY AND, IN SOME CASES, ENTIRELY, INNATE. THE CARRYING OUT OF THESE PERSISTENT PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR ... GIVES MEN A SENSE OF IDENTITY AND PURPOSE ... WORK IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL ACTIVITIES OF LIFE, A SOURCE OF SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION, THE BASIS OF IDENTITY."

PERHAPS THE 20TH CENTURY CREDENDA OF ARGYLE ARE MORE ACCEPTABLE THAN THE VICTORIAN HYPOTHESES OF CARLYLE. HOWEVER, BOTH ARE MAKING THE SAME POINT: WORK IS NOT SIMPLY SOMETHING WE HAVE TO DO TO MAKE MONEY TO DO SOMETHING ELSE. TO WORK IS AS NATURAL A HUMAN URGE AS TO PROCREATE. MAN HAS A "NEED" TO WORK.

EVEN THOSE WHO, SUPPOSEDLY, DO NOT HAVE TO WORK--SENIOR CITIZENS, THE YOUNG, THE RICH--TAKE ON LEISURE OR VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES AS A MORAL SURROGATE FOR WORK.

IF I CAN ADD TO M. VOLTAIRE: "SI DIEU N'ESISTAIT PAS, IL FAUDRAIT L'INVENTER; C'EST LA MEME CHOSE DE TRAVAIL." OR "IF GOD DID NOT EXIST, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO INVENT HIM; IT'S THE SAME THING WITH WORK."

THERE WAS NO NEED TO 'INVENT' WORK FOR PRE-CIVILIZED MAN. THE BATTLE TO WREST FOOD FROM THE INHOSPITABLE WORLD WAS A DAWN-TO-DUSK PROPOSITION. THERE WAS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN AN INDIVIDUAL'S WORK LIFE AND PERSONAL LIFE; THEY WERE ONE AND THE SAME. PRIMITIVE MAN DID NOT SEPARATE THE BASIC ECONOMIC VALUE OF WORK FROM ITS AESTHETIC, RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL VALUE. HIS WORK, AT BEST, BARELY MET HIS PHYSICAL NEED, BUT IT CERTAINLY FILLED THE PSYCHOLOGICAL.

IN OUR CENTURY, THE SITUATION APPEARS TO HAVE REVERSED ITSELF. MANY IN OUR HEMISPHERE HAVE LOST, FIRST, A SENSE OF THE INHERENT SATISFACTION OF WORK, AND, SECOND, A SENSE OF THE SOCIAL VALUE OF WORK.

THE DEGREE OF INDUSTRIAL DISHARMONY AND OUR LACK-LUSTRE PRODUCTIVITY RATE ARE SIGNS OF THE CANADIAN WORKER'S DISSATISFACTION WITH HIS JOB. IF CANADA IS TO ACHIEVE ITS POTENTIAL, WE MUST CREATE AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH BOTH THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF THE WORKER CAN BE MET.

TODAY, THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER IS BETTER EDUCATED, BETTER INFORMED, AND BETTER PAID FOR SHORTER HOURS THAN EVER BEFORE IN THE RECORDED HISTORY OF MAN. THE PHYSICAL NEED FOR WORK IS BEING MET. BUT WORK SATISFACTION IS LACKING FOR MANY WORKERS. IN FACT, SOME SEE THEIR JOBS, NOT AS VEHICLES TO SELF-FULFILLMENT, BUT AS OBSTACLES.

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT THE CANADIAN WORKER DERIVES LITTLE PERSONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL VALUE FROM HIS WORK.

THE TREND AWAY FROM INDIVIDUAL WORK TOWARDS GROUP WORK HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT. TO A GREAT EXTENT, THE INDIVIDUAL HAS LOST BOTH PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP OF HIS PRODUCT,

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THE PRIMITIVE CRAFTSMAN TOOK GREAT PRIDE IN HIS WORK AND DERIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL SATISFACTION FROM IT. THE TYPICAL ASSEMBLY LINE WORKER, TODAY, HAS NO PHYSICAL OWNERSHIP AND MINIMAL PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP. ONE WORKER'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CREATION OF A CAR IS VIRTUALLY INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE CONTRIBUTION OF HUNDREDS OF OTHERS.

WITH MINIMAL PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP, THERE IS MINIMAL PSYCHOLOGICAL 'INCOME'. YET THE INNATE HUMAN NEED TO WORK PERSISTS. THUS, WE SEE THE GROWING POPULARITY OF AVOCATIONS WHICH MAY BE STRENUOUS AND DEMANDING--BUT ARE PERSONALLY SATISFYING. AND WE SEE INCREASING CONCERN ABOUT THE QUALITY OF CANADIAN LIFE.

A RECENT REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION NOTED: "JUST AS WORK STRESS CANNOT BE DISSOCIATED FROM LIFE STRESS, JOB SATISFACTION CANNOT BE DISSOCIATED FROM LIFE SATISFACTION."

WORK WAS SATISFYING TO THE PRIMITIVE WOMAN WASHING CLOTHES IN THE STREAM OR TO THE MAN PLANTING RICE-SHOOTS, BECAUSE THE WORK THEY DID WAS CLEARLY, AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO THEIR LIVES AND NEEDS. TOO OFTEN TODAY, JOB RELEVANCE IS EITHER AMBIGUOUS OR TOTALLY ABSURD.

WHERE SUCH LACK OF RELEVANCE EXISTS, THE RECENT THERAPEUTIC (REMEDIAL) EFFORTS ARE OFTEN FRUITLESS.

AN EXPERIMENTAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM WAS CONDUCTED AT A CANDY FACTORY WITH TWO GROUPS OF WORKERS. ONE GROUP UNWRAPPED CHOCOLATES--A CLEARLY USELESS TASK. THE OTHER GROUP WRAPPED. THE INCENTIVE PROGRAM HAD NO EFFECT ON THE UNWRAPPERS, BUT INCREASED THE WRAPPERS' OUTPUT BY 300 PERCENT.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE CANADIAN WORKER WANTS TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION--THROUGH HIS OR HER WORK--TO OUR SOCIETY. BUT, TO WHICH SOCIETY? THE SOCIETY WHICH WAS, THE SOCIETY WHICH IS OR THE SOCIETY WHICH MAY BE?

IN THIS ERA OF THE MOST RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN MAN'S HISTORY, MANY OF CANADA'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS ARE IN SUCH A STATE OF FLUX THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF CITIZENS FEEL A SENSE OF DISQUIET AND ALIENATION FROM THEIR SOCIETY.

INFLATION CONTINUES TO BE THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEM FACING CANADA. HALF OF THOSE SURVEYED BY THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC OPINION CITED INFLATION AS OUR NUMBER ONE PROBLEM.

THE NATIONAL EFFORT TO RETRAIN INFLATION IS SHOWING SOME BENEFICIAL EFFECT.

HOWEVER, I AM STILL NOT CERTAIN THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE ROLE THAT GOVERNMENT PLAYS IN FUELING INFLATION.

WHILE THE FEDERAL EXPENDITURE IS GROWING AT THE RATE OF 20.0 PERCENT, ONTARIO'S COMMITMENT TO REDUCE EXPENDITURE AND TO CONTROL GROWTH RATES TO 10 PERCENT ARE CLOSE TO TARGET.

THE ACTUAL GROWTH RATE TARGET FOR 1976-77 IS 11.1 PERCENT AS EXPENDITURES FOR 1975-76 WERE \$72 MILLION LESS THAN EXPECTED, THEREBY LOWERING THE BASE. THE ACTUAL GROWTH RATE FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1976-77 WAS 11.5 PERCENT, WITHIN FOUR-TENTHS OF ONE PERCENT OF THE TARGET.

HIGH LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT HAVE RAISED FEARS AND DAMAGED OUR SENSE OF SECURITY. IN SEPTEMBER, THE NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE STOOD AT 6.5 PERCENT AND 5.8 PERCENT IN ONTARIO.

WE CAN PLAY WITH THE NUMBERS AND SEASONALLY-ADJUST THE RATES, BUT ALL THE NUMERICAL JUGGLING IN THE WORLD WILL NOT AMELIORATE THE CRUSHING, SOUL-DESTROYING EFFECT OF UNEMPLOYMENT UPON THE INDIVIDUAL. NOR WILL IT DILUTE THE NAGGING FEAR OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

IN RESPONSE TO THESE TWO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, OUR FEDERAL LEADER DECLARED THE FAILURE OF THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM AND PROPOSED MAJOR RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY. THEN FOLLOWED A LITANY OF ABSTRUSE VERGIAGE, REplete WITH IMPERSPICUITY AND EQUIVOCATION.

HOW CAN THE INDIVIDUAL EXPRESS HIS CREATIVE ENERGIES OR MAINTAIN A FEELING OF SECURITY WITH SUCH AMBIVALENCE FROM OUR NATION'S LEADER?

THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS PROVINCE BELIEVES IN THE FREE MARKET SYSTEM. WE BELIEVE THIS SYSTEM CAN GENERATE THE FINANCIAL AND HUMAN ENERGY TO SOLVE OUR SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS. RECENT FEDERAL PRONOUNCEMENTS MAY INDICATE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MAY BE MOVING TOWARDS THAT UNDERSTANDING. BUT THAT BELIEVE HAS BEEN A CORNERSTONE OF ONTARIO'S ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY FOR AS LONG AS ANY OF US CAN REMEMBER.

THE NATIONAL TREND TOWARDS GREATER GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS OBVIOUS.

TO ILLUSTRATE: I WOULD CITE THE GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT INDEX, CREATED BY EXECUTIVE MAGAZINE TO MEASURE THE PUBLIC SECTOR INTERVENTION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

USING 1970 AS A BASE OF 100, THE INDEX ROSE BY AN AVERAGE OF TWO PERCENT A YEAR DURING 1971 AND 1972, AND BY ABOUT SIX PERCENT DURING 1974 AND 1975. IT NOW STANDS AT ABOUT 115. EXECUTIVE MAGAZINE PREDICTS THAT UNLESS TRENDS ARE REVERSED, GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT COULD REACH 130 BY THE END OF 1977. IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT.

I BELIEVE THE TREND MUST BE STOPPED--INDEED, REVERSED--IF WE ARE TO IMPROVE WORK IN CANADA.

RIGHT NOW, THE CANADIAN WORKER HAS LITTLE SENSE OF STABILITY. IF HIS OR HER CREATIVE ENERGY IS TO BE RELEASED AND UTILIZED, GOVERNMENTS AT ALL LEVELS MUST CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THEIR SUPPORT OF THE FREE MARKET SYSTEM, RATHER THAN CONTINUING THE PRESENT THINLY-VEILED COLLECTIVE ROUTE TOWARDS STATE TYRANNY AS THE BASIS FOR OUR SOCIAL SYSTEM.

I AM FULLY CONFIDENT THAT THIS ECONOMIC SYSTEM CAN ENABLE THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER TO MAKE A TANGIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIETY. I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT CAN CREATE JOBS--AND MEANINGFUL JOBS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL PROVIDE REAL GROWTH, RATHER THAN GROWTH BLOATED BY INFLATION.

MY HOPE IS THAT THE AVERAGE CANADIAN SHARES THIS CONFIDENCE. THEN, HE OR SHE CAN DERIVE FROM WORK THE SATISFACTION--PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, EMOTIONAL-- WHICH WE ALL REQUIRE AND DESIRE.

JUST AS THE WORKER MUST DERIVE SATISFACTION FROM WORK, WORK MUST PROVIDE BENEFITS AS WELL.

DURING THE PERIOD OF EXPLOSIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE IN THIS COUNTRY, WE HAVE BEEN LESS THAN FULLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT, AND INADEQUATELY AWARE OF, ALL OF THE SAFETY AND HEALTH PROBLEMS INTRODUCED. OUR INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES HAVE POSED PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HAZARDS. IN SOME SITUATIONS, CONDITIONS IN THE WORKPLACE HAVE PUT WORKERS IN ACTUAL PHYSICAL DANGER.

BY WORKER, I DO NOT MEAN JUST THE HOURLY-PAID UNIONIZED EMPLOYEE. I AM SPEAKING OF ALL WORKERS, INCLUDING CLERKS, EXECUTIVE PERSONNEL AND, EVEN, DOCTORS. WHEN A FIBRE OF BLUE ASBESTOS ENTERS A LUG, IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THE INDIVIDUAL HAS A SIGNED A UNION CARD OR OCCUPIES THE EXECUTIVE SUITE.

CREATING A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE HAS BEEN --AND CONTINUES TO BE--A DEEP COMMITMENT OF MY MINISTRY. AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, MY MINISTRY HAS TAKE SEVERAL NEW INITIATIVES TO FULFILL THAT COMMITMENT.

A BILL CURRENTLY BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE WOULD CREATE, WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, A CENTRALIZED AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS OF THE WORKPLACE. IT IS TO BE HEADED BY DR. RODNEY MAY, A WIDELY-RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH.

I ANTICIPATE THAT A COMPREHENSIVE OMNIBUS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY BILL, REPLACING LEGISLATION NOW IN EFFECT, WILL BE PRESENTED TO YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES DURING THE NEXT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE.

MY MINISTRY IS WORKING TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ENFORCEABLE STANDARDS ON EXPOSURE LIMITS TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND CHEMICAL AGENTS, BASED ON THE THRESHOLD LIMIT VALUES, AN INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED MEASURE OF EXPOSURE. WE ARE WORKING DILIGENTLY WITH EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF, AND COMPLIANCE WITH, LEGISLATED STANDARDS. WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS INCREASING CO-OPERATIVE ACTION ON THE PART OF LABOUR AND MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT IN THE PROMOTION AND MAINTAINANCE OF SAFETY AND HEALTH.

WE HAVE A MORAL OBLIGATION TO DO ALL WE CAN TO CREATE A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE. WE OWE IT TO THE ONTARIO WORKER. PEOPLE OF THIS PROVINCE EXPECT NO LESS.

I DO NOT WANT TO RAISE FALSE EXPECTATIONS,
WE MUST BE REALISTIC ABOUT OUR ABILITY TO REACH UTOPIA.
WE ARE WORKING WITH INCOMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL THE FUNCTIONS
OF THE HUMAN ORGANISM. THE TOTAL EFFECT OF SUBSTANCES
UPON VARIOUS PORTIONS OF THAT ORGANISM IS ALSO UNCLEAR.

WE ARE FACED WITH SOME WORKPLACES WHICH, BY
THEIR VERY NATURE, ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO NATURAL
PHENOMENON THAN OTHERS.

AND WE ARE DEALING WITH FALLIBLE HUMAN BEINGS
WHO DO NOT ALWAYS FOLLOW PROTECTIVE PROCEDURES OR WEAR
SAFETY EQUIPMENT.

I HAVE GRAVE DOUBTS THAT, IN THIS IMPERFECT
WORKING ENVIRONMENT, WE CAN CREATE A TOTALLY RISK-FREE
ENVIORNMENT--AS EARNESTLY AS WE MAY DESIRE IT, AS
ZEALOUSLY AS WE MAY STRIVE FOR IT, AS MORALLY BOUND
AS WE ARE TO WORK TOWARDS IT.

OUR RESOLVE TO PUSH BACK THE BOUNDARIES
OF IGNORANCE AND EXPAND THE FRONTIERS OF KNOWLEDGE MUST
NEVER FALTER. THE COMMITMENT MUST BE TOTAL AND IT MUST
BE SINCERE. IF WE ARE TO CREATE A SAFE AND HEALTH WORKPLACE,
IT MUST COME FROM LABOUR, FROM MANAGEMENT, FROM
GOVERNMENT AND FROM THE PUBLIC AT LARGE,

WHILE THE GOVERNMENT CAN SET STANDARDS AND, WHEN NECESSARY, ENFORCE COMPLIANCE, IT CAN NOT LOOK OVER EVERY EXECUTIVE'S SHOULDER NOR STAND AT EVERY WORKER'S ELBOW. EACH EMPLOYER, EACH MANAGER, EACH SUPERVISOR, EACH WORKER MUST RECOGNIZE AND DISCHARGE HIS OR HER INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY.

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE REAL DANGERS ARE IGNORANCE AND APATHY.

I HAVE SHARE WITH YOU MY FEELINGS ABOUT OUR SOCIETY. PERHAPS I HAVE CONCENTRATED MORE ON MY CONCERNS THAN ON MY PRIDE IN OUR ACHIEVEMENTS. BUT I BELIEVE WE MUST FACE OUR SHORTCOMINGS SQUARELY AND WITHOUT HESITATION.

IT IS ONLY THROUGH OPEN AND HONEST DISCUSSION THAT WE WILL ERADICATE THOSE CONCERNS. LABOUR AND MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT MUST DEAL WITH THESE CONCERNS AS PARTNERS--NOT AS ADVERSARIES.

CERTAINLY, GOVERNMENT MUST FULFILL ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT IT MUST NOT ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE COST OF GREATER GOVERNMENT INTRUSION IS TOO GREAT--BOTH IN TERMS OF MONEY AND IN TERMS OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM.

THE VAST RESOURCES OF BOTH THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS MUST BE HARNESSSED AND DIRECTED CO-OPERATIVELY TOWARDS MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CANADIAN--THE NEED FOR PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION FROM WORK.

TOWARDS THE NEED FOR WORK ITSELF.

UNLESS THOSE NEEDS ARE MET, OUR ABILITY TO CREATE A STABLE, GROWING AND PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY WILL BE SEVERELY PREJUDICED. BUT I HAVE CONFIDENCE.

I BELIEVE THAT THE DEEP PERSONAL NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CAN BE MET.

I BELIEVE THAT THE NEEDS AND GOALS OF THE INDIVIDUAL, UNIONS, CORPORATIONS, GOVERNMENT AND THE ENTIRE SOCIETY CAN BE BROUGHT INTO HARMONY.

I BELIEVE THAT THIS GRAND EXPERIMENT IN INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE, IN FREE ENTERPRISE IN PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY CAN FUNCTION FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ALL.

I BELIEVE THAT ONTARIO CAN BE, NOT ONLY THE PLACE TO WORK, BUT THE PLACE THAT WORKS FOR ALL ITS CITIZENS.

THANK YOU.