

*Employment Tax Credit Act*

problems will be associated with it, especially those affecting women.

My hon. friend from Kootenay East-Revelstoke mentioned the problems attached to the centralized and computerized chip switching which is going on in British Columbia right now in many of the smaller communities he represents. The problem there is that women operators are being put out of work by new forms of technology. Nobody wants to be a Luddite about these things; we are not trying to hold back the clock. But we certainly want to make sure that the benefits of technology are at least distributed equally among the population. The benefits should not all go to those who happen to be captains of industry favoured by a number of other things—the tax system, import duties, tariffs, various things like that.

What has happened with centralized switching is that these people are being offered an opportunity to be retrained; the women will mainly be retrained into the jobs that are going to disappear. If they are going to be retrained into jobs such as clerking jobs or retail freight jobs, that is not going to be helpful.

During the fifties and sixties, as I and others have pointed out, the service trades and retail trades expanded. But it is precise by the clerking and the service trades that are going to disappear with the new technology, technology that hooks the computer to the fiber optics cable or the coaxial cable, and ultimately to the word-processor which can not only write letters but can do all the filing and the retrieval of information from storage. So it seems to me we have to consider alternative ways of placing the employees concerned. The telecommunications workers anyway estimate that approximately a million and a half women in the eighties have jobs which are going to be displaced by the new technology.

Let me give an example of the benefits. In 1976 computerized switching was introduced into Vancouver. After that, 22 per cent of the operators jobs disappeared! Computerized switching was introduced into New Westminster shortly after that—I think around 1978-79. What happened then? Forty per cent of the operators disappeared from that kind of employment. It is not laughable. The minister is smiling but it is a very serious matter if you happen to be the one who loses his job. And the minister is the one at whose desk the buck will stop, because he will be charged with creating a great number of new jobs in the eighties if his efforts are not co-ordinated with a government policy that includes an industrial strategy.

When the minister appeared before the committee this morning he talked about the increase in manufacturing in the communications industry in Canada. I will give the House an interesting statistic. As far as telecommunications is concerned, our imports in 1956 amounted to 46 per cent of all telecommunications equipment we used. In 1976 we imported 76 per cent. What this proves conclusively is that our manufacturing sector in telecommunications is shrinking. If our manufacturing is shrinking, presumably our employment is shrinking in those very sectors. The picture is something less than rosy, if I may be excused a terrible pun.

It is not just this particular member who is making these predictions. I do not think the public is aware of the extent of these things at the moment but certainly the ministry must be. And the ministry must be prepared to move actively toward an industrial strategy which will take care of these predictably displaced people, some one and a half to two million people, mainly women, in the next decade. The president or chief executive officer of Northern Telecommunications—which can hardly be called a radical outfit and is not usually quoted by the New Democratic Party—Walter Light, who was speaking before an audience at Concordia University, was kind enough to send me a copy of his speech. He was speaking to a group of engineers and had this to say:

Canada imports 80 per cent of all the technology that it uses.

That includes all technology, including telecommunications technology. This means that as an industrialized country we are only 21 per cent better in the creation of technology and innovation than any non-industrialized Third World country that is totally dependent on others for its technology. So there is no point telling us that we are going to create a lot of jobs in the eighties if we have an industrial strategy that ignores the amount of imports and does nothing to encourage domestic production while allowing a flood of things to come in here. The minister is wasting money on these little penny-ante programs if the government has no policy for an industrial strategy which favours Canadian manufacturing over imports. Apparently we have not.

I gave two figures; we used to import 46 per cent of our telecommunications equipment but we now import 76 per cent. The Secretary of State this morning told us we are going to increase that percentage. I hope he is right. He suggested this morning that he would like to encourage the manufacturing and export of Canadian-produced telecommunications equipment. I am saying that the experience of the last 20 years flies in his face. If he can reverse that—

**Mr. Fox:** I was not here then.

**Mr. Rose:** He says he was not here then. May I carry on with a quote from the same speaker? I see the clock, Mr. Chairman, but if you give me one minute, I can conclude my remarks.

● (1700)

**The Assistant Deputy Chairman:** Order, please. Unfortunately, I have to advise the hon. member that he cannot carry on.

**Mr. Rose:** You will hear it at eight.

**The Assistant Deputy Chairman:** It being five o'clock, it is my duty to rise, report progress, and request leave to consider the bill again later this day.

Progress reported.