

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 30, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 62—TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

**Mr. Deans:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) is not able to be here this morning. I request that the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) be allowed to move the motion in his name.

**Mr. Pinard:** Agreed.

**Mr. Nielsen:** We do not believe that any such request is necessary. The Hon. Member can rise and move the motion in the absence of the Hon. Member for Oshawa. While we do not refuse consent, for the record we do not consent because we do not think it is necessary.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Chair would like to proceed this way today but has made a note of the remarks of the Hon. Member for Yukon and would prefer to discuss the matter privately with the House Leaders to see if another arrangement could be arrived at for future occasions.

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East)** moved:

That this House endorse a program to be incorporated into the forthcoming budget that will:

1. provide for employee consultation in the introduction of technological change;
2. provide flexible work arrangements to minimize job losses;
3. ease the impact on the employees affected by technological change by having the corporate sector pay a fairer-share of the costs through longer prenotification periods and improved severance pay;
4. expand the necessary retraining programs; and
5. encourage technological changes that promote new products, industries and jobs.

● (1110)

She said: I welcome the opportunity to move the Opposition motion which you have just read, Mr. Speaker. I also welcome the opportunity to be the first speaker for the NDP on the very important subject of technological change in Canada. The impact of the micro-electronic revolution already is upon us. The future holds many exciting challenges. It also creates many fears for Canadians who face job displacement and

unemployment unless major government planning is undertaken now in co-operation with all sectors of our economy to make high technology work for people and for our society as a whole.

Recently our Leader introduced a paper called "NDP Program for a Fair Recovery" which proposes a number of initiatives which are essential if we are to make the high technology revolution work for people as well as to increase Canadian productivity in world markets.

Before dealing with this proposal, I want to review the human side of technological change. The examples I give are not new but are repeated from studies and case situations which have been presented recently to an NDP task force on technological change which is currently touring in my Province of British Columbia. Let us take shopping centres for example. The next time you go to a shopping centre, Mr. Speaker, look at the automated cash registers which soon will replace most clerks, warehouse workers and office services in the local supermarket. Customers soon will put their goods over an electronic plate which returns change and bills. Security staff will replace clerks, accountants and most workers who are now employed. Of course, they will join the ranks of the hidden unemployed.

We have heard a lot about offices of the future which will displace secretaries, paperwork and even middle management personnel. Our new toy here on the Hill, word processors, will soon be obsolete. Each manager will control his or her own desk computer. The British Columbia task force was told that 86 telephone operators are due for layoff in the Terrace region because of automation. This has already taken place in several other nearby areas. A pulp mill near Prince George which is being automated will be run by only 12 technicians with a dramatic layoff of workers. In a report called "The Future of Micro Electronics" Barrow and Curner stated that the following workers will be displaced by the micro-electronic revolution: postal workers, typists, retail clerks, stock clerks, cashiers, telephone operators, draft persons and accountants. Robots will replace warehouse workers. Data preparation staff and computer operators soon will be obsolete, as will junior and middle managers. Electric plates will replace library assistants. Proofreaders, compositors, meter readers and telephone repair people will be redundant.

Researcher Jane Stintson of the Canadian Union of Public Employees stated that within 25 years 50 per cent of today's jobs will no longer exist. The President of General Motors estimates that 90 per cent of that corporation's new equipment will be computer controlled by 1988. By 1985, female unemployment could reach as high as 26 per cent overall. By 1990 it is estimated that nearly one million more women will be unemployed due to advances in clerical areas of work. British