

Supply

While agreeing with the Bishops' assertion that jobs are necessary for every single person and that seeing to that should be the priority of any Government at any time, I would at the same time question the Bishops' statement in another area, an area that I think can reflect back on the present problem as well. I would criticize the Bishops' statement to the extent that they almost totally neglected agriculture. I think that it is very important in today's world to look at what has happened in modern agriculture as an indicator of what will happen in all other sectors of the work world.

Agriculture is an area that has entered into technology to a far larger extent and sooner, I believe, than many other areas. The University of Saskatchewan was built by pioneers who came to Saskatoon at the turn of the century and immediately began to build this university which includes a great agricultural school. At the time the university was founded, agriculture was a form of production that required a great number of people. These people are depicted in old pictures that can be seen all over the West, pictures of big threshing crews and of the trains that transported working people from the East out to the West to harvest the crops. To harvest even a small farm required maybe one machine and 40 men. Besides that there were bunkhouses and cookhouses and cooks and all the rest of the workers who went with this operation of harvesting let alone ploughing, sowing, and everything else involving a great number of people.

What happened to the farming industry was that it mechanized. It mechanized at a very high level so that for the same amount of land and higher production, one person or two at the most can now do what formerly took 40, 60, or 80 people to do. Those farmers who lost their jobs, one might say, had to get off the land, come to the city and build it. At that time, industry absorbed those people in the new jobs of manufacturing cars or whatever had to be done.

Now the industries in the cities are beginning to go the way of the old farm. What is happening now is that industry does not need that same number of people to produce what is needed. That problem must be faced, and it must be faced in the context of the whole planetary system.

Interestingly enough, some people may have seen last night on television the report that British Leyland, an automotive company in England that produces very high quality cars, has cut back over 25 per cent of its work force in the last two years but now produces three times as many cars. That is the same thing that happened in agriculture in the Prairies in the 1930s when they sold off their horses and bought a little tractor and began to do more cultivating than was possible with horses. It was a big breakthrough. Now it is happening in all industry. The robot system and new technology makes it possible to produce more goods with less people.

● (1700)

Basically we come to the question of what is human work. That question has to be faced by everyone. Traditionally, since the time of the industrial revolution people have associated income or livelihood with work. I would say that in general we

are still talking in those terms, but I believe we must question that now. Will there be enough jobs? Will it be possible to produce anything more than we need and have everybody work, or does society have to look at a new way of distributing the products of industry and farming? There must be a serious rethinking about how goods produced by human beings are distributed by human beings. It is too big a question to put here, but I believe we must consider it when talking about unemployment in the present age.

To recapitulate, Mr. Speaker, as a people, as a Parliament, as a Government I believe we have to look at questions that we have not considered seriously before. We have to see that everyone has a job, but those jobs could be very different from anything we have known in the past.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Do any Hon. Members rise to ask questions? If not, the Chair will recognize the Hon. Member for Sudbury (Mr. Frith).

Mr. Doug Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, before getting into the main part of my remarks I should like to congratulate the Hon. Member for Saskatoon East (Mr. Ogle) for adding a new dimension to the discussion this afternoon. He outlined quite properly some of the problems that face our youth today. Some of the issues he raised not only affect our youth but also affect most Canadians in the work force and not on the unemployment rolls. Some of the technological changes that he mentioned as having taken place in the last 30 or 40 years are still occurring every hour of every working day in Canada and in most western industrialized nations. Each of these technological changes that takes place means a loss of jobs for workers in any segment of the economy you wish to look at. The Hon. Member mentioned the massive mechanization of the agricultural sector not only in Canada but in most western countries. He pointed out that over a period of time workers who previously found work in the agricultural sector were able to move, as part of what Toffler calls "the second wave of the industrial revolution" into the metropolis and find jobs in the manufacturing sector.

The Hon. Member is well aware that in the last three or four years a technological revolution has taken place in the agricultural industry. The technological change is frightening to many people, but in industrialized countries they are going to have to be educated to it. It will accelerate over the next five to seven years and it is not going to go away. If anything, experience should dictate that as we get into what I term the post-industrialized age, robotics and microprocessors will become more common. Everyone talks about the computer revolution that is taking place today, but I believe that is only going to have a very small effect on employment patterns in the western world compared to the effect that microprocessors will have.

Over the years the Hon. Member for Saskatoon East has given me a list of reading material to educate me in some of the areas that affect all of us in today's world. I should like to recommend two books. First, Toffler's "Third Wave", but more important a book called "Megatrends" by Anderson. He