

Supply

That is what this debate is all about today—where we will be in the next century in the wake of the technological revolution. What happens at the outset? The Government reduces its commitment to training, to post-secondary education, to building the youth of this country to be able to tackle the tremendous problems that lie ahead. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Government's parsimonious approach to research and development. Some of my colleagues will deal with this matter today but I want to mention briefly the comparison of Canada with other countries in the field of research and development, the areas where we should be in the forefront but are failing so obviously.

For all of our world-beating abilities in certain fields, in the area of communications, for example, we still have a great trade deficit in technology and information systems of over \$1 billion in 1980. That is estimated to be a trade deficit of \$5 billion by 1985. France, with less of our pioneering investment in this area, has had a national goal to turn its 1981 deficit of \$330 million into a surplus of \$6.7 billion by 1990. To do that, the President of France has made the commitment to raise R and D expenditure by direct and indirect government support to 2.5 per cent of the French GNP by 1985. In Canada our target is 1.5 per cent, a full percentage point behind France.

In the last Budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) direct R and D support of \$450 million per annum was increased by \$185 million, to total \$635 million in the present fiscal year. The Science Council of Canada reports that the Swedish Government, in contrast to our \$635 million expenditure, spent \$1.2 billion directly on R and D in 1979-80. Four years ago it was far ahead of us. The Netherlands spends only marginally less than we do with a much smaller Gross National Product. While Japan, France and others have initiated a whole range of public awareness programs to mobilize their societies to accept and meet the challenges of high technology, in Canada we have earmarked the magnificent sum of \$1.5 million for public education in this tremendous field. Without a commitment to research and investment at least equal to our direct competitors, we will never develop or maintain our own technological industries.

• (1150)

There has been a great deal of comment about the need to bring about greater public awareness of what is happening in the field of high technology, to try to educate public attitudes to the changes taking place. I attended a conference on this subject not long ago at Harvard University and I was struck by a statement that a very learned professor made at that conference. He said that high technology would have an impact on changes to society greater than anything that has happened since the mammals came out of the sea and stood upright. That was his analysis of how tremendous the change in our society is going to be. To adapt public attitudes to that change is going to take leadership at the very highest levels, leadership which so far has been conspicuous by its absence in this country.

Time and again the federal Government's own committees and councils, reports and studies, have been specific in their proposals for someone or some authority to pull all the strings together. Governments, industry, labour, education all have to be pulled together. The social impact subcommittee of the Canadian Videotext Committee calls for a national commission charged to make recommendations on major policy issues. The Labour Minister's advisory council calls for a Cabinet committee to initiate and co-ordinate technological policy. The Science Council wants a First Minister's advisory committee. The micro-electronics task force wants a centre for technology, work and human priorities, which will report directly to Parliament annually. Our counterparts in Europe and Japan have already gone through this process and we still lag so far behind.

Sir, the road ahead of us is no easy one. It is not paved with yellow brick, nor is our destination truly known. But it is the only road forward and our competitors are already firmly launched on it. As one Dutch politician said of the same circumstances facing his country, it is like a gold fever. "Those who are not moving fast enough will miss the boat. Those who fail to take the lead are forever left behind. Those who fail to join the race are forever handicapped". That, Sir, is the position in which Canada seems to be at this time.

I now want to come to an area of particular importance to me, that of high technology and its impact upon women—women in the labour force and in the home. There have been many, many studies done, Sir, which have clearly indicated the position of women. It is indicated particularly that it will be critical for women if this issue is not faced clearly and faced now. There can be no doubt that women will bear the brunt of job displacement. That has been said on many occasions. The change in the structure of work will have a profound effect on women. The dangers of job ghettos and the entrenchment of women in low paid, low skill employment is very real. Clearly the social consequences for women are tremendous if they do not get an equal opportunity at training for the jobs of tomorrow.

The Government's response to date is clearly inadequate. It does not even recognize that women have a particular problem with technological change, as was evidenced in the speech given by the Minister responsible for the status of women. Just last week, on January 26, she spent one minute of her speech in the Throne Speech debate dealing with this issue, and then ended up by patting herself on the back and saying: "We established a task force on micro-technology through Labour Canada". Well, Sir, we have that task force report "In The Chips: Opportunities, People And Partnership", but not a thing has been done about it for two and a half years.

Already, Mr. Speaker, we face the prospect of over one million unemployed for the balance of this decade. There will be a further million added to the job loss we presently see in our society. These are jobs to be lost as a result of technological change, and most of them, it has been predicted, will be those traditionally performed by women. High technology is in progress around the world and is not going to grind to a halt.