

and the world IC industry and helps in the free market in semiconductor chips and the spread of chip technology.

The third exemption allows anyone to reproduce a topography, or manufacture or import an integrated circuit for either a private or a non-commercial purpose.

A defence in an infringement action is also given to innocent infringers who were unaware and had no means to find out that an IC product had been manufactured without authority.

This bill will provide the protection and the flexibility the Canadian IC industry needs. It will keep us in line with our trading partners and provide an environment for investor confidence.

I would like to remind the House that providing intellectual property protection for our industries is but one element in the government's industrial strategy designed to keep Canada on the leading edge of international competitiveness.

At the same time that we are protecting our innovators, we are taking steps to make sure that their products move quickly from the lab bench to the shop floor. In the past months, the government has introduced several major programs to ensure that Canada's industrial future is a high-tech future.

The designers and fabricators of ICs will benefit from the Strategic Technologies Program which promotes networks and alliances, particularly in the areas of pre-competitive development of technology and its diffusion to Canadian industry.

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Information technology, of which circuit topography is a vital component, has been identified as one of the three strategic technologies targeted by the program. The others are biotechnology and advanced industrial materials including silicon and ceramics which are of interest to the integrated circuit industry.

As well, the integrated circuit industry in Canada will benefit as a result of the national Network of Centres of Excellence program that is a key component of the government's InnovAction strategy.

Government Orders

Through the Network of Centres of Excellence program, a consortium of 12 researchers from nine Canadian universities will receive \$14 million to research and develop micro-electronic devices, circuits and systems for Ultra-Large Scale Integration. These researchers will respond to the technological challenge of squeezing more than 10 million functioning electronic components onto a microchip layer smaller than a fingernail and thinner than soap film. The technology is expected to become the mainstay of the next generation of telecommunications and computer systems.

The Canadian integrated circuit industry has room to grow and to pioneer new innovations. It has proven to be a leader in telecommunications, in finding new ways to serve the specific needs of customers, and in seizing international market niches.

Canadian firms are moving ahead in such areas as analog ICs for speech and handwriting recognition, machine vision, robotics and industrial process control. They are contributing to the progressive miniaturization of IC technology.

The legislation before us gives the integrated circuit industry in this country an essential tool to remain competitive, to attract investment, and to ensure that our products are protected in the markets of our trading partners.

It is legislation that responds to the needs of the industry for adequate protection. It gives them the tools to protect their interests and investments without undue regulation or without the restrictions that would hamper technology transfer.

I hope that the members of this House will join me in supporting a bill that is important to our future as a high-tech nation. The future holds tremendous promise and potential. Our integrated circuit industry is ready to seize that promise and fulfil that potential.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to put what this statute does into layperson's words. So that people know what these little microchips are like, they are layer upon layer of circuits with silicon covering. It is a bit like designing a high-rise tower. The officials, when they explained it to me, gave the analogy of a high-rise office tower. Somebody has to design where the pipes go through, the