

the new technologies and, in that respect, it can indeed be ambivalent. One can easily imagine people being quite reluctant to welcome new technologies in industry, and yet wanting to be first to own microwave ovens, electronic calculators, videorecorders and personal computers. It has also been noted that the impact of new technologies has been stronger in certain trades which originally gave impetus to industrialization and were in the vanguard of dynamic eras, but which are now falling by the wayside.

What can be done? Knowledgeable people claim that it is up to the industrial sector first to pick up the challenge and make the necessary restructurations, while taking market forces and social factors into account. But there is another major consideration is a system such as ours: the private sector has to identify the most promising applications of the new technologies and adapt them to the needs of the market place, whereas Governments must support private enterprise, including in high-risk and long-term development research sectors.

Indeed, it was with all those factors in mind that last year Employment and Immigration Canada published a document entitled "Perspective on Employment: A Labour Market Policy Framework for the 1980's" where the labour market policies are defined as follows: to ensure relevant training to create the skills necessary for growth; to ensure access of all Canadians to jobs; to assist those individuals displaced by industrial and technological change; to create employment opportunities, especially in communities with a declining or non-existent economic base; and to facilitate co-operation between business, labour, and government to achieve high levels of employment.

It is on these principles of skill creation, access to jobs, adjustment assistance, local employment development and collective responsibility for change that Canadian labour market policy must be based, as I have just said. With respect to that situation, Mr. Speaker, I think that the various programs sponsored by Employment and Immigration Canada will make it possible for us to meet the requirements of employees and employers alike in the field of new technology. We also have the means to improve our skills, and it is just a matter of Canadians taking part and participating in those programs.

• (1230)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): A ten-minute period is allowed for questions and answers or comments. Debate.

[*English*]

For debate, the Hon. Member for Richmond-South Delta (Mr. Siddon).

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member who just resumed his seat a question, if I may. Does the Hon. Member feel that the Government—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Order, please. I recognized the Hon. Member for debate.

Supply

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Fine, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to resume the debate in accordance with your request.

The New Democratic Party has put forward today a most interesting recommendation that certain initiatives be taken by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) and incorporated into his forthcoming Budget. These proposed initiatives fall into five general areas. I will not repeat the details; that is for the proposers of the motion to do. However, I would like to begin by suggesting focussing on the concern of the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) when she presented the motion that she not be perceived as a Luddite and that her Party not be seen as anti-technology. Yet from listening to her speech and the questions asked of her subsequently and the comments of the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis), there is a tendency for the NDP to create a negative emotion in society; the same fear of technology which led to the Luddites wrecking cotton machines and other inventions of the industrial revolution. This pervades their approach to the new era of exploding technology, as was so aptly described by the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald).

This is also reflected in the order in which the five recommendations are given in the proposed motion. I, for one, would have preferred to see the fifth point as essentially the headline to this motion. The fifth point recommends that the Government incorporate measures in the Budget to "encourage technological changes that promote new products, industries and jobs". My statement that the priorities should be altered somewhat is not to diminish the importance and validity of the other four recommendations. But if we do not get our priorities straight, we will miss a tremendous opportunity which Canada must grasp if we are to keep pace with the rapid equalization through technology that is ongoing around the world.

Technology and what is happening in this decade is an example of the role of technology as a great equalizer. Technology through history has improved the standard of living of all. It has also allowed backward societies to emerge and develop new strengths, even societies which were previously very poor in the area of natural resources. No better example could be seen than those societies which came through the tragedies of war and emerged in the 1980s to be among the strongest nations of the world. I am speaking specifically of Japan and West Germany.

We must recognize that technology is a great equalizer. In that frame of mind we have to find ways to maintain our traditional momentum in these areas. The time is fast disappearing when we can sit back casually on our laurels and expect our natural resources to buy all the good things we have come to take for granted in society.

Among the nations of the world, Canada probably possesses one of the best educated pools of talent on the face of the earth. Yet our young people, in particular, are now facing unemployment in massive and unprecedented numbers. They should indeed be the instruments of transforming intellectual