

*Technological Change*

and have the efficiency and productivity to export fiberoptics and fiberoptic technology around the world. This type of thing could be done by the federal Government and by the Governments of Ontario, Quebec or any other Province, particularly in the field of computers with all schools, hospitals, municipal offices and Crown corporations using computers.

We should use Government procurement policies more to promote Canadian industries in a planned and rational manner instead of buying many of these things abroad. We as Canadians could produce these and provide long-term economic security and job security to Canadians for the rest of this century.

My list is far from complete, but finally—and ninth in terms of the items I have listed this afternoon—this committee could take a look at the human and moral implications of high-tech. It could ensure that its introduction is in accordance with long time accepted human values and objectives. We must ensure that high-tech in Canada is introduced in such a way as to give more freedom and liberation to people, not enslave them to the robot and the computer. We must ensure that the tasks done are the dirty, dull, boring or dangerous jobs, not the more creative ones. We have to ensure that this technology does not make our society a less productive one, a poorer one or an unemployed one. We must ensure that the introduction of new technology makes us more productive, more exciting and wealthier, each and every one of us in the country.

One could say many other things about advanced technology and its importance in the country, but mainly I believe that we need a committee of the House to study the social and economic implications of high technology in Canada. I have listed a number of reasons for that and a number of things at which we should be looking. I call on Hon. Members of all political Parties in the House to come together on this idea and agree to pass this motion and establish such a committee for the fall session of Parliament, so that Canadians through their Members of Parliament will have some input into one of the most exciting and massive transformations in society in many, many years.

**Mr. Jim Schroder (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) for bringing this matter to the attention of the House and making us aware of the impact of technological change on our society. I think he gave a very useful list of things about which we as a Government and as a Parliament should be concerned. This afternoon I intend to talk about some of the things the Government is doing and to indicate that indeed we take into account many of the things he mentioned.

I am pleased to take the opportunity this afternoon to outline the Government's efforts to manage the technological change for the benefit of all Canadians. The recently announced technical policy clearly recognized the social dimensions of technology and the need for greater efforts to manage the social impact of technological change. Among the primary national objectives of the policy is our determination to manage the process of technological development to ensure

that Canadians are aware of both the opportunities and the problems which might arise.

Our efforts are focused on longer term economic goals which will be achieved through the increased management of technological change. The Government has approved a \$10 million fund to be spent over the next two years to encourage business and labour to establish a centre for productivity and employment growth.

The federal Government has set more detailed objectives for itself to support individuals and institutions in responding to the changes, challenges and opportunities posed by technological development. One objective is to ensure that all Canadians are aware of technological change on their lives, which is very important. Another is to anticipate the impact of technological change and to minimize its negative impacts in close consultation with those most likely to be affected, particularly working Canadians whose jobs may be affected. Also we want to provide access to training and educational opportunities that will help individuals take advantage of new opportunities. We have a fear that people will get the impression that there is nothing they can do about the technological revolution and that it will leave them behind. As I said, we have to provide access to these training and educational opportunities so that individuals will take advantage of them rather than fear them.

Another objective is to ensure that individuals in all regions of the nation have similar ranges of opportunity and that all regional economies take advantage of technological opportunities in line with their comparative advantage. The recently announced budget allocated an additional \$155 million over the next two years for human resource development programs, to upgrade the skills of Canadian workers and to ease their adaptation to technological change.

A subcommittee on technological development has been formed. As was announced in the recent technology policy statement, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has established a special subcommittee of Cabinet, chaired by the Minister of State for Economic Development and Minister of State for Economic Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Johnston), to deal with all matters concerning technological development. Because of their departmental mandates, the Ministers on the subcommittee have the power and resources to influence all matters concerning the implementation and impact of new technologies. The subcommittee provides a vital policy link which will assess the social impact of technological growth and initiate programs to ease the negative aspects of technological change on our social environment.

At the meeting of the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, Members of all Parties favoured the idea of establishing some sort of parliamentary committee to look at important science and technology policy issues, including the socioeconomic impact of technological change. This is being considered now, although the concept of a standing committee rather than a special committee is attractive because we are concerned with the effects which will take place over the longer term. This will require continued attention rather than