

in the electrical industry which they allege is caused by the import of electrical components and television sets from outside the country. This is undercutting the Canadian industry.

It was regrettable that on that day, while the meeting was set up, not a single member of the government met with these gentlemen and ladies who were with them. Efforts were made by the leader of the New Democratic Party and others and, as a result, a meeting was held later in the afternoon between the representatives and the minister.

● (2200)

On January 29 I raised the matter in the House of Commons. The minister said he had taken part in a fruitful discussion and would be holding another meeting in a week or two. Then we would know what was going to take place.

I believe the House would be interested in knowing exactly how serious is this problem. To that end I intend to cite sections of the brief presented by the representatives of the electrical workers. I quote from page one:

The influx of imports due to the reduction of tariff levels, the decrease in exports as a result of the protectionist measures taken by our trading partners and the many non-tariff restrictions against Canadian goods, and the threat of a further decrease in the tariffs are all creating a situation which can only lead to the demise of the Canadian electronics industry.

The brief goes on to say on page two:

While we are sympathetic to the government's desire for a more liberalized trade with the emergent and undeveloped countries, we cannot countenance a situation where Canada is in the forefront of these efforts whereas other developed countries are not co-operating and are, in fact, taking advantage of the situation. We cannot sit idly by and allow the bargaining gains and job security for which we have struggled and sacrificed to be erased through loss of jobs due to imports which have now exceeded 60 per cent of the market and are rapidly increasing.

Again, on page two, the brief goes on to say:

What is happening in our country is repeated with variations in the textile industry, in the rubber and tire and footwear industries and others. What affects our fellow workers eventually affects us. We are concerned.

What affects these workers does not only affect some of their fellow workers. It affects all Canadians, since the electronics industry is a vital and necessary component of the industrial background of this country. To indicate how serious is the situation I should like to quote from page ten of the brief:

In the TV segment itself the picture is even darker. Although the market has grown by 80 per cent, from 809,000 sets in 1968 to 1,458,000 sets in 1973, the made in Canada TV sales increased by only 50 per cent while American and offshore imports increased by 230 per cent and 106 per cent respectively. In colour TV the imports have grown by 320 per cent.

The brief estimates that in TV assembly alone some 10,000 jobs, actual and potential, have been lost. In the appendices we read that, beginning in 1967, imports accounted for 39 per cent of the domestic market, and that by 1973 imports accounted for 60 per cent. Table 2 of the brief shows that in 1967 the trade deficit between imports and exports of electronic equipment amounted to \$370 million. By 1973 it had increased to \$920 million. In 1969 the total number of people employed in the electronic

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industry in Canada was 78,500. By 1973 the number had dropped to 68,000.

There is no need to elaborate. These figures are stark enough in themselves. I am suggesting, and I am sure hon. members will agree, that the time has come for action to be taken on the part of the government. The cheap imports which are entering the Canadian domestic market must be dealt with in a way which is consistent with the welfare of the working people of this country and the necessity of maintaining a viable electronics industry in Canada.

My question is very simple: exactly what does the minister intend to do, and how soon will he take steps to alleviate this serious situation which, each week and each month, is resulting in fewer people being employed in this vital component of the Canadian industrial sector?

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, on January 27, 1975, union representatives headed by Mr. Georges Hutchens met the officials of various departments and made representations to them regarding the employment situation in the television and electronics components industry.

At the meeting, union representatives described the employment situation as it is today in the various firms specializing in electronics. Representatives from the Department of National Revenue explained the antidumping investigation procedure now taking place in respect of television sets and the representatives from the departments of Finance and Industry, Trade and Commerce described some multinational trade negotiations mechanisms from GATT.

The brief submitted by the union contained different specific proposals of government measures. Since these proposals concerning government responsibility are broad, the ministers of labour, finance, external affairs and of revenue will have to be consulted concerning the moves to be taken by each one of them.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce will then prepare a joint reply to the brief and organize another meeting with union officials to discuss these important issues. This procedure which was described at the meeting was universally agreed to by all participants. Since then, Mr. Hutchens has written to the department to indicate his satisfaction with the steps taken.

[English]

SOCIAL SECURITY—SUGGESTED REVIEW OF PENSION ESCALATION FORMULA—POSSIBLE INCREASE IN BASIC PENSIONS

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, December 11, 1974, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 2159, I addressed a couple of questions to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) concerning old age pensions.

My first question related to my suggestion that there should be a serious review of the escalation formula so that it might more closely match the needs of our people, and be on a current basis instead of in arrears. After a reply by the minister to that question I put another in