

agricultural trade and agricultural exports. Thus, we see that this bill affects various sectors of the Canadian economy and we must give it careful consideration.

It seems to me that some of the concerns expressed from time to time have not been totally rational. I say this with the greatest of respect, at the same time noting that some of the concerns expressed are valid and should be taken into account. I believe, too that some of the concerns which have been expressed from time to time have been expressed in a way which I do not think reflects the degree of maturity that we require in Canada to deal with the various interests, concerns and conflicts with which we are faced.

Speaking as a member from western Canada I can say, as hon. members will be aware and as you, Sir, will be very much aware, that from time to time—many hon. members would say “on numerous occasions”—problems of western Canada have been brought before the House. These have involved everything from damp wheat and farm income to wheat sales, grain movements and so on. These constitute very real problems for us. I might say that while remarks about these problems were listened to with interest by members in some parts of the House, there was also a certain amount of reaction from members coming from other parts of Canada. They were very unhappy that some of us from western Canada had taken advantage of numerous occasions to raise some of these problems. I suggest that many of those members did a disservice to Canada and to Canadian unity by not giving proper recognition to the very real problems that some of us were attempting to raise.

● (3:20 p.m.)

In the bill under consideration, we are concerned about the problems of the textile and clothing industry. As has been noted, these are very real problems. The industry has had to contend with problems of low cost imports. These have had a very serious effect on employment in the industry. Some of the provisions of the bill, of course, have been drafted with this factor in mind.

My colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), will be dealing with some of the considerations involved in the assistance to workers which may result from any further dislocation to this industry. The fact is that this industry has faced serious disruption and serious problems. It is obvious that the industry must adjust. It requires time to make these adjustments, but nevertheless they must be made. In addition, further adjustments will be forthcoming.

Within the past few weeks there have been newspaper articles on new technological innovations in the textile field which will greatly cut down on the employment available in this industry. Very large amounts of investment will be required if Canadian firms are to keep up with international trends. It is obvious that the industry has responded, and we can expect a further response. Whether the response has always been adequate is another matter upon which I do not pass judgment at this particular time. We have a duty to respond positively to the situation which we face at the present time. In my

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view, a negative response would be a disservice to Canada, to the people who work in this industry, and to those companies associated with the activities of this industry. If there were no signs of response, legislation such as this probably could not be justified at the present time.

We must try to find a good balance with respect to our economic situation. We have to take into account the trading needs of Canada, and the fact that we must not only export but import as well. We have to take into account also the concerns of the industry in Canada, and the need to carry on industrial activity in this country. Reference has been made to some of the exchange problems which have developed. These remarks may not be completely consistent, because while the exchange problem has resulted in some very real problems in some sectors of the Canadian economy at this time it will, on the other hand, force some sectors of the Canadian economy to upgrade their standards of activity and productivity.

We consider this legislation to be a step forward. It is a useful innovation. As far as we are concerned, we are going to watch and judge the government on the basis of its actions. The minister made quite clear during the second reading stage and before the committee that the government must and will bear final responsibility for actions taken under this legislation. However, Mr. Speaker, there is one aspect of the structure involved in this bill which needs further consideration and development. I refer to the whole question of industry planning.

The minister made it quite clear that responsibility rests with the government. In my view, this is correct. The board is to be given a free hand in making its recommendations. This is also correct. I have no quarrel with this position. However, what is the framework within which the board must operate? The board really cannot make judgments unless it has some knowledge of industry plans, and the direction in which the industry is moving. Within what sort of a framework will the board be operating which will enable it to make sound judgments to pass on to the minister?

What is needed is an overview of the situation which will enable the board to make more rational and useful recommendations to the minister, on which he will then pass judgment. At the present time, the board is expected to react to proposals, plans and requests of the minister as well as other inquiries. It is entirely dependant upon requests for action. This is going to be the basis of its activities. As I understood the questioning that took place in the committee, there is no provision for consultation with the minister or the department while an inquiry is in progress. I want to make it clear that I do not suggest any restriction on the powers and freedom of the board to carry out its studies and prepare recommendations for the minister.

The government has not adopted the principle of planning which would enable an adequate job to be done. There is an element of “ad hocery” in the bill as it is before us at the present time. There is no overview which would permit the problems of the industry to be