

Last week when the statement was made, we heard a number of protestations, some even from Members of the New Democratic Party who have that wonderful capacity to have nothing but the best answers because they have never had to implement them.

Mr. Riis: Just wait.

Mr. Axworthy: I want to talk for a moment about the Canadian Industrial Renewal Board. In some ways that is at the crux of this debate. It was brought into effect after the application of the quotas in 1980 as a joint initiative by the private sector and the Government of Canada to provide for a series of supports to industry to facilitate its modernization. It was an interesting model, one which has been examined and followed by many other countries.

For those former professors who have lectured on questions of industrial readjustment, they might want to go back and read some of the reviews of those examinations that have appeared in a number of fairly learned journals in Great Britain, Europe and in the United States. That particular Canadian Industrial Renewal Board was a co-operative partnership between members of the industry, some very senior business people, along with key federal departments who were to start planning the development and the reorganization of industries facing competition of low labour industries from offshore.

● (1650)

We recognized at the time that it was a problem, and at the time our position was that there should be a two-pronged approach: to continue protection and at the same time, and running parallel, to put into place the type of co-operative assistance that would allow the industries to reach a certain stage of maturity and self-sufficiency and strength such that they could meet the competition.

We recognized that in some according to old industrial standards they could not meet the competition, but that, through a combination of new design and marketing initiatives, Canadian industry, whether it be the textile industry or footwear, could find niches in the global market; that it could find certain areas in which, through the input of information and the input of intelligence and the input of highly skilled manpower, it would be able to fashion services and commodities and products that would have sales appeal. But, Mr. Speaker, that takes time. It is not something that happens overnight.

The Hon. Member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. Langdon) says: "Well, it can be done in two years and we can wrap it up and all go home". The fact is, it is something that takes a period of time to achieve. The Canadian Industrial Renewal Board was established to allow the time for those industries, in conjunction with that private sector/government agency, to intervene, to invest, and to develop.

This Government has now had 14 months in office. It knew it was going to have to make a decision on the quotas at some point in time. It has had 14 months to take the Canadian

Supply

Industrial Renewal Board and improve upon it, to augment it and change it, as recommended in this report, a report in which the Canadian Import Tribunal states that the Canadian Industrial Renewal Board should have its funds increased and its powers augmented. The Government has now had 14 months to either act on that recommendation or to come up with its own industrial plan for the shoe industry.

Why is this Government now talking about planning? Why is it now saying that it will give grants of \$100,000 for industrial adjustment services? Having been responsible for that program, I can tell you that this grant system is nothing more than a placebo. It is a way of simply bringing workers together to find a temporary solution to their unemployment.

The Government has had 14 months to prepare for its decision with regard to the alternative to take in respect of this industry, a decision which should have, as its central objective, the capacity and the ability of this industry to survive in terms of the international competition it faces. Absolutely nothing has been done. There has been no planning; there has been no preparation. Indeed, this Government went one step beyond in getting rid of the Canadian Industrial Renewal Board. This Government got elected because they were so much smarter than we were. That being so, why didn't they—

An Hon. Member: You said it!

Mr. Axworthy: —why didn't they replace the Canadian Industrial Renewal Board with something that was better?

An Hon. Member: You said it!

Mr. Axworthy: I am simply repeating what you have said. What I want to know is, where is the proof of it? Where is the proof of your ingenuity and your innovation? Where is the new industrial strategy for shoes and for textiles? Where in the process is the Minister of DRIE in terms of the development of an effective industrial strategy for these so-called sunset industries?

He doesn't have one. The Government doesn't have one. It now comes to a point where it imposes this kind of a Draconian decision on that industry and then leaves that whole sector hanging out to dry, just as it has left the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke hanging out to dry. Neither the industry nor the Member for Sherbrooke will survive. The workers will remember. They know when they have been had. They know when they have been had by this Prime Minister.

There would have been a higher level of tolerance and understanding had this Government at least tried to help. When the shoe manufacturers came to the Minister several months ago with a proposal for a new investment of \$70 million in new plant and production methods—and investment that would have led to the creation of new jobs and the creation of new products—did the Government of the day take up that offer and agree to sit down to discuss it? Did it say: "We know that we have a lot of pressure from the Americans and from the Europeans and that we have to come to an answer. We realize that there has to be some modernization of