

Customs Tariff

Mr. Dupuis: He speaks and understands French very well.

Mr. Ricard: In fact, he probably speaks better French than the hon. member who just made that interjection.

The textile industry, Mr. Chairman, is one of the most stable in Canada. Employment in the textile industry, which in 1951 gave work to 98,000 people has been reduced to only 81,000 workers in 1956.

You will have noted, Mr. Chairman, that this situation occurred under a Liberal regime and those people are the very ones who today reproach the government with helping out textile workers. Yet, they did nothing at the time to prevent this situation from developing at the expense of the worker.

While in 1930, that industry was supplying 71 per cent of the national consumption, in 1957 it got only 57 per cent of the domestic market, always under a Liberal regime. From 1950 to 1955, still under a Liberal regime, foreign producers were allowed to grab 43 per cent of our national consumption. In 1948, Japan exported 0.4 million dollars' worth of textile products to Canada while in 1954, under a Liberal regime, I repeat, \$4 million worth of Japanese textiles were imported into this country. In 1956, Japan exported to Canada 13½ million yards of cotton, that is, the equivalent of 5 per cent of the Canadian production. While the Canadian production of textile products slowed down by 19 per cent, the Liberal government allowed foreign producers to export 24 per cent more textile products into Canada. From Italy alone, during the year 1956, again under a Liberal administration, shipments of woollens amounted to 1,720,000 yards, that is an increase of 140 per cent over the preceding years.

Mr. Chairman, the speeches made in this house by some hon. members of the opposition show clearly that the textile industry's business had begun to decline long before the Conservative party came into power. Some time ago, the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Boivin) said, among other things, that the Canadian production of running shoes, the manufacture of which is based upon textile products, had dropped from 3,127,222 pairs in 1949 to 1,931,178 pairs in 1955, and this was again under a Liberal administration. Again, according to the hon. member for Shefford, during the same period the importation of shoes went up from 2,000 to

2,200,000 pairs. Mr. Chairman, it is interesting, to see people who did nothing at the time, shed hot tears now over the present fate of textile workers.

I am therefore happy, on behalf of the textile workers of St. Hyacinthe, to thank the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming) for his stand in connection with our textile industry. About the consequences of the steps he has taken, I would like to quote an article published in *La Presse* on July 9, 1958:

About 200 employees of the Penman's mills, at St. Hyacinthe, have been called back to work after many months of forced idleness. Mill manager E. G. James stated at the beginning of the week that production was "almost" back to normal.

In a letter to the member for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot in the House of Commons, Mr. James expressed his satisfaction that the tariff board and the federal government seem concerned with the serious problems of the textile industry. He points out however that the company of which he is the manager at St. Hyacinthe is only indirectly connected with the woollen industry which at the moment is foremost in the minds of our legislators. Mr. James adds that his company is very much interested in the tariffs that will apply to the knitting industry. In conclusion, he conveys his thanks to the federal member for St. Hyacinthe, Mr. Theo Ricard, for his concern over the textile regression and the interest he has shown in ways to protect that basic industry.

Mr. Chairman, the textile industry certainly has not yet solved every problem it has to face, but I trust that the legislation introduced by this government will be such as to give more work to employees of Canadian textile mills.

(Text):

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

Mr. White: I did not intend to take part in this debate until the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate quoted from the *London Free Press*. He mentioned an article by Mr. Walter Harvey of the University of Western Ontario, and he tried to leave the impression with this house that the ideas expressed by Mr. Harvey were those of the *London Free Press*. I should therefore at once point out to him and to the house that Mr. Harvey is a free lance writer and that practically all the articles carried in the *London Free Press* are preceded by these words:

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the *London Free Press*.