

*Supply***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

## ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 63—FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY—IMPORT QUOTAS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Tardif (Richmond-Wolfe):

That this House regrets that the Prime Minister has once again broken an election campaign promise, this time by failing to maintain quotas on imports on shoes and by compounding this betrayal by failing to make adequate provision for the thousands of workers whose jobs are adversely affected.

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, first let me express my deep condolences and sympathy to the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Charest) on his funeral speech. It is always a sad occasion when a Member who thought he had such a bright and promising political career has had it prematurely brought to an end by the actions of his own Government. Those of us in the House who have seen this happen on occasions from time to time can only express our deep understanding of the predicament of the Hon. Member and others who have built their careers on the untimely and unwise foundation of relying upon the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) to say what he intends and to follow through on that. Surely by now many Canadians are worrying that that is a very slim and unreliable reed upon which to build any sense of expectation of the future. We can only say we admire the way in which the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke has gone down with his sinking ship with brave words flying and his facts totally out of whack.

This is an important debate, Mr. Speaker. It is an opportunity for us to come to grips with some of the most important issues facing Canada. In one unfortunate way the shoe industry is serving as the example which should give warning to all other industrial sectors on what to expect from the Government when it comes to the crucial issue of how they will be treated when it comes to matters dealing with an effective trade policy.

The fundamental defence that we have heard in the House from the Minister and others reminds one of what certain people used to say. When the then Leader of the Opposition made his famous statement, his declaration of Sherbrooke, that under no circumstances, under no possible conceivable future circumstances would he ever change his mind, he said: "We did not know that the Liberals at the time were going to start a study."

Anyone who had known anything about the industry at that time would have known there were a series of inquiries concerning the competitiveness of the footwear and textiles industries which proceeded on an almost periodic basis to assess the current state of those industries. No one says that one has to listen to the recommendations of a study. I know the Minister has made some sort of legal argument about it, but it is absolutely fallacious. There is no requirement to agree with recommendations. The Government simply takes studies as good advice if it so desires.

What I find interesting is that the Government did not take the advice of the import tribunal. It took part of the advice. It took the advice which said to get rid of the quotas. The Government totally ignored all of the advice and all of the recommendations which said what measures the Government should take to assist the shoe industry to modernize and to assist workers to gain some protection.

I think the Minister is an honourable man as are all Members in this House. He should cease and desist trying to use that explanation. If he is going to stand in this House, as he did in Question Period and during this debate and say that the import tribunal made him do it, that he was compelled by the logic of its argument, then I want to know why the Minister left out so much of the tribunal's conclusions and recommendations. Why has the Minister and his Government so totally ignored the proposals made for development of a proper industrial program, and to provide alternatives for the workers? Why did the Government leave out the kind of major labour market-place programs that are required to deal with workers' needs? Why did the Government, in effect, eliminate a substantial part of the findings of the report and simply go to chopping quotas?

I think we know the answers. The one side of those recommendations fits with the Government's peculiar ideology and with the necessity of satisfying pressures from the Americans and the Europeans. We have come to understand that about the Government. We know what stimulates its sense of action and direction. When the President of the United States says jump, the immediate response is to ask "How high?".

When it comes to the question of dealing with the responsibility of a federal Government to respond to industrial or economic problems and to use the resources, the planning and the facilities of the federal Government to assist and facilitate adjustment, the Government relies on the "market-place theology". The Government starts to say: "My goodness, we cannot have the Government intervene", unless it happens to be Domtar, Petromont or Hyundai. All of a sudden the Government finds some convenient excuse to forget those principles in the market-place and immediately comes up with the cash, the bail-outs and the big grants. I say that because some of the Members at least used to have a great time when in opposition with self-righteous indignation at our Government's attempt to help industry. There is only one difference, Mr. Speaker, ours worked. Theirs do not seem to. We had the example of Chrysler. The Government has the example of the Canadian Commercial Bank. One succeeded in preserving jobs. The other has succeeded in almost bringing the banking industry to its knees. Of course, we can make comparisons in other areas.

The fact is the Government is dissembling very seriously on this issue and that is the reason for today's debate. That is why it is important for us to consider what is the responsibility of a Government when it says it is removing a form of protection from industry. What responsibility does the Government have to assist that industrial sector and the workers in it to meet competition?