

The Budget—Mr. Allard

Therefore, I would ask the Minister of Finance to have doubts about his forecasts and his advisers. He should pay as much attention to men of great experience and exceptional qualities like Dr. O. J. Firestone, vice-dean of the faculty of social science at the University of Ottawa and former economic adviser at the Department of Trade and Commerce, who advocates a tax reduction, and Mr. Robert Beck, president of DuPont of Canada, who recommends an increase in our production potential.

Before I conclude my remarks I particularly want to call the attention of the minister to the Canadian textile industry and the many problems it is facing.

This industry contributes a great deal to the Quebec economy. As a matter of fact, it has about 417 mills in the province employing 35,879 workers; it is the fourth most important Quebec manufacturing industry. Most of the mills are found in about 20 of Quebec's larger cities. In my constituency of Sherbrooke there are 12 spinning factories: Austin, Bruck Mill, Carnegie, Domil, Dominion Textiles, Fil National, Glenhill, Kayser, Morgan, Paton, Sheer Silk, Tricotex.

The textile industry is very important to Quebec, and to more than 20 cities. It has stood the test of time and is now lying at the mercy of increasing foreign imports; yet, in his budget speech, the minister never so much as hinted that he would intervene or consider means of reducing foreign imports.

There is great concern in the Quebec textile industry at the present time. More than 5,000 textile workers are unemployed and some factories have no alternative but to pay their employees the lowest salaries in the whole of Quebec industries and to have them work in inhuman conditions to achieve a certain level of production; employees are working relentlessly from morning till night, taking only five or ten minutes out for lunch.

The textile sector of our economy is perhaps the most Canadian of all our industries; 80 per cent of its capital is made up of Canadian investments. I think the minister and the government should make an effort to preserve our industries. I have received many complaints from labour and industrial organizations.

In 1963, particularly, imports from Japan increased by 37.5 per cent; those from Hong Kong rose by 36 per cent. We sell wheat to Communist China. I would not mind if we sold it to all the countries in the world.

[Mr. Allard.]

In return, we accept textile products. I would ask the government to diversify imports and to suggest to foreign countries to diversify their exports to Canada instead of always sending textiles.

The hon. minister has the figures. He knows that Communist China buys wheat from us and other things which it needs and in return sends us 75 per cent and more of textile products, which we do not need since Canadian industry can meet our domestic demand.

I would like to ask the hon. minister to consider the fate of the textile industry in view of the present acute crisis which is shaking this country, for thousands of citizens are affected by it in the province of Quebec. I would like to ask him to study means of putting a stop to these imports. The best way to do so would be to bring their prices in line with those of Canadian products, by setting their value for customs duty purposes.

As an alternative quotas should be maintained and, if need be, improved. The scope of quotas should be broadened to include additional products and each category should be clearly defined. In fact, the only solution to the problem of low priced imports would be to set all inclusive quotas.

Quotas should be applied to all items of clothing, products and textiles; there should even be sub-quotas to prevent over-saturation through concentration as it is now possible.

These are suggestions which should be studied by the hon. Minister jointly with his colleague the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters), and the government should also take an active part in the study. We do not know what the government's policy is with regard to the textile industry. I hope it is not the one expressed by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate (Mr. Pickersgill) who, in 1959—I do not have the reference, but if it is requested, I could give it—who said that the textile industry was not sustained by Canadian raw products and gave the impression, throughout his long speech, that it was one which should be allowed to go to ruin. I trust that is not the present government's policy and that it will soon adopt vigorous measures with regard to that important industry.

● (8:20 p.m.)

[English]

Hon. R. A. Bell (Carleton): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon the Minister of Citizenship and