

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

who have been and will be forced to a premature retirement.

Is this due to the Canadian shoe industry? Absolutely not, since the Canadian worker's productivity increased by 67 per cent between 1948 and 1968, which means that it is 35 per cent higher than that of the Economic European Community countries.

Nevertheless, the union representatives, meeting in Montreal under the chairmanship of Mr. Eugène Ran-court, stated, and I quote:

Imports are the major problem in the footwear industry. In 1956, Canada imported only seven million pairs of shoes, that is 11.7 per cent of its national production, but, in 1969, 46 million pairs were imported, that is 79.4 per cent of the national production.

It is estimated also that footwear imports in 1969 were equivalent to a loss of at least 15,000 jobs in Canada. Canada is the country which is most open to shoe imports from Asian and state-controlled countries. In general, Canada's imports from those countries are almost as high as those of all the Common Market countries together, although its population is only one tenth of that of the European Community. All that meant that in 1968 there was an excess of footwear imports over exports of the order of 46 million.

It is obvious that nothing has yet been done in that respect and, which is even more serious, the skilled men in that field have no hope whatever of being hired back, since Canadian manufacturers are getting ready to avail themselves even more of easy import conditions.

A letter which the Slater Shoe Company (Canada) Limited sent to its customers on the closing of its Montreal plant is another proof of this alarming situation.

Let me now quote that letter dated April 1, addressed to the company's customers.

During the past few years, Slater has secured the co-operation of the best master shoemakers from Europe in order to give you a product of superior quality.

Today, after years of discussions, an agreement has finally been entered into in connection with quality control, data checking, choice of models, and so on.

Our national advertising campaign throughout Canada will be stepped up and we hope that you will join that program by taking advantage of our co-operative system.

On April 7, the Slater Shoe Company (Canada) Limited sent to its customers another letter which reads as follows:

As you know, the famous Slater shoes, known for their quality for 102 years, are now made in Spain, Italy, France and Great Britain.

Everything is going according to plan, and you will soon be able to admire a magnificent collection of Slater shoes both in current and high fashion models.

Our new models will soon be on display and our representatives, whom you know so well, will certainly be proud to show them to you.

The letter was signed by Mr. Phillippe Ayers, vice-president of Slater Shoe Company (Canada) Limited.

Mr. Speaker, because of very strong competition from some countries where labour costs less, the Canadian government is allowing plants to close their doors.

[Mr. Godin.]

The same thing is happening with regard to household appliances. This includes radio and television sets that are imported at the expense of Canadian manufacturers and workers.

We also import textile products, claiming that in so doing we save money because it would cost too much to produce them.

On the same principle, the government does not exercise any control over shoe imports from other countries. It is not profitable to make them, so we buy them.

Mr. Speaker, if this keeps up, how long will the Canadian economy hold out? If we are not given protection to manufacture here what we can manufacture, according to the needs of Canadian consumers, how long can we hope to remain idle, while buying elsewhere?

In peacetime, trade should be limited to international transactions. Our production is constantly challenged by foreign competition, again, because of the allegedly good wages paid in these countries. But when war is declared, all this is forgotten.

I remember the 1939-45 war, when England became our best customer. I remember also that our manpower was not considered too costly to be sent to fight in these countries, and even to destroy them.

In war time, cost is no object. To keep troops in Germany, cost is no object. To keep troops fighting in Korea, Greece or Turkey, the wages paid our soldiers are no problem.

So, I wonder whether the minister can assure us that he will take measures, and will soon let us know what he intends to do so that Canadian manufacturers are considered essential to the operation of our economy.

Canadian industry, the shoe trade in particular, deserves protection and I would like to know what the government intends to do in that regard.

**Mr. Bruce Howard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member for Portneuf that I am well aware of the difficulties of the footwear industry.

Increased imports have hurt some sectors of the Canadian shoe industry. However it has not been clearly specified what field of production was affected and how serious was the damage. Special statistical analyses should show where pressure is strongest. Furthermore, the department, in co-operation with the industry, has undertaken a special study in order to ascertain whether low cost imports have really hurt the Canadian industry.

If so, the interdepartmental low price import policy committee will make recommendations to the minister in order to cope with the situation.

The government is ready to pay special attention to cases where competition due to imports is unfair. The Minister of National Revenue recently completed an inquiry into possible dumping in the case of shipments of shoes from France, Spain and Italy. If it is true that there was some dumping, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Anti-dumping tribunal, which will be asked to rule on the matter.

In December last, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce announced new steps proposed under the