

The new Clothing and Textile Board that is to be set up will have a very big job. It is to have authority to look into all matters affecting the importation of goods into Canada, as well as authority to study whether or not Canadian manufacturers of textiles and clothing are conducting their affairs in such a fashion that the people in the industry are protected. I am not so much worried about the industrial manufacturers themselves as I am about the individual people working in the industry who have been affected, and may in future be even more affected, by many of the goods that are imported into this country.

As I say, the board will have a difficult job. It is true that it cannot make any rules. All it can do is suggest to the Government what it thinks would be of importance and help to the industry, the workers, and the economy of Canada. Once the board makes its report, it is then up to the Government to decide what should be done.

Canada is a trading nation. I have said before in this chamber that trade is not a one-way street. If we wish to export goods to other countries we must be willing to allow the importation of goods. But sound judgment must be exercised so that imports do not adversely affect the thousands of workers in the particular industry. The board in its wisdom, in studying these matters, is going to have to consider the international situation. It is going to have to consider the importers, the exporter and, in general, the consumers. Above all, it will have to consider the 200,000 people employed in the textile and clothing industry. As I say, it is a big job, an important job, and one that can have even greater effect on the Canadian economy in future than it has in the past.

In his explanation of the bill Senator Cook quoted a number of helpful figures. He pointed out that about 12 per cent of the total number of people employed in Canada's manufacturing industries are employed in the textile and clothing industry. Senator Cook also said that in the textile and clothing industry there are more female workers than in any other industry in Canada. I believe he said there were almost as many females in that industry as in all other industries combined. Speaking from memory, I think he stated that 75 per cent of the Canadian female workers in the manufacturing industries in Canada were employed in the clothing industry, while 43 per cent were employed in the textile industry. By "textile industry" I mean, of course, the industry concerned with the spinning of yarns, and so on.

Another important item of the textile and clothing industry is that it is spread over most of the provinces of Canada, thereby giving work to a wider section of our people than any other single industry. The textile industry is one that is very often found in smaller communities and towns, and it is very often the mainstay of them.

It is true that there are many types of industry that have settled in or near the large centres such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, but the textile industry embraces a different type of work and it is quite possible that it is more widespread and of greater benefit to the Canadian economy than any other industry in this country.

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There was a time when the textile and clothing industry was not considered to be as well looked after as others because we had sweatshops and bad working conditions. In recent years, however, the wages paid in the textile and clothing industry have been good and compare favourably with those paid in any other industry, except where special training or skill is required. The people employed by this industry in Canada are second to none. I have visited many clothing and textile plants in Canada, the United States and other countries and in my opinion the workers in our Canadian plants are equal to if not superior to those elsewhere in similar plants. I think that the Canadian textile industry is growing. We are doing more business in Canada and we are even achieving greater export business. Needless to say the export business has to be in the more highly priced items because we are not able to compete with countries where the wages paid are very low. It is not necessary to name those countries because honourable senators know which countries I speak of.

Some twenty years ago I had the opportunity, along with others, to make an intensive study of the textile industry in Canada. We found that one of the countries exporting large quantities of textile goods to Canada was paying its workers 16 cents an hour while the Canadian rate was \$1.07 or \$1.10 an hour. The situation has changed considerably since then. Last fall I visited Japan and Hong Kong and endeavoured to ascertain the rates being paid to their textile workers. I was not able to discover the specific rates, but I understand that they are about half what is being paid by the Canadian textile manufacturing industry. I cannot vouch for this; I simply had to take the information given to me and make the best of it.

One of the big problems facing the Textile and Clothing Board will be to decide just how far they can go in making recommendations to the Government. I for one am very much opposed to the idea that there should be some method worked out whereby employees of the textile and clothing industry who are affected by competition from goods imported into Canada should be paid for being laid off work. I think we should try to bring up our Canadian industry to the point where these people could earn this money rather than simply receive it as an outright payment from the taxpayer. The Government should make sure that they have the opportunity to do this. I say this, honourable senators, because this situation could affect not only the 200,000 textile and clothing employees and their families, but indirectly the retail merchants. If these people are not earning money, then they do not have it to spend. Furthermore, it could affect the farmer and the fisherman and, indeed, every segment of the Canadian economy.

I am not saying that the textile industry is more important than any other industry in Canada, but I am saying that it affects more people either directly or indirectly. Therefore I hope this board will be in a position to make recommendations that will be valuable to all Canadians.

Honourable senators, let me go back to the depression years. In the early thirties conditions were very, very bad