

Canadian International Trade Tribunal Act

public interest, more attention has to be paid to the fact that this Bill is ready to allow the tribunal to help the affected industry adopt the machinery and technology to meet increased import competition effectively, or to enable the affected industry to move into other lines of production. It should also help the workers involved to get the skills and training which will enable them to keep their jobs in an industry which may be a very different kind of industry as a result of a ruling of the tribunal, or in some cases to help them go on to work in a totally different industry.

This key aspect of dealing with import competition has been virtually ignored by the Government's proposal. I hope that we will have the opportunity, and I predict another Liberal Government will have that opportunity, to do a better job than this Conservative Government has done until now, especially through Bill C-110 in addressing the vital issue of adjustment.

By way of conclusion I want to say that although I have brought forth some concerns about the Bill—and these concerns and others I have not mentioned have been expressed with a great deal of eloquence and insight by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Trinity—I do want to say that our general position is that there is much desirable about Bill C-110 in so far as it rationalizes three separate pieces of trade legislation into one piece of trade legislation. As I have said, this kind of rationalization and the over-all improvement of our Canadian trade legislation are essential components of our Liberal trade policy.

I am glad to have put on record some comments on Bill C-110. I think we have reached the stage where this debate can be concluded, and for that reason I am happy to conclude my own remarks.

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak for a few moments in the debate on Bill C-110, an Act to establish the Canadian International Trade Tribunal. I am tempted to say at the outset that this debate, brief as it will be, is a nice demonstration of why the House should not be sitting into July as it is doing now. This evening we are having a very brief third reading debate on a Bill that may be of enormous importance to Canadian industry, the manufacturing industry generally. It deserves to be treated with all the seriousness which that involves. Quite simply we have had persons from the Government, the Official Opposition, and my caucus speaking to the Bill who are not directly involved with it. The Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Hockin) is not here. I do not mean to violate the rules or cast any reflections at all, because his Parliamentary Secretary is standing in for him, but the Liberal House Leader and myself are here doing yeoman service for persons who know the Bill intimately, who are aware of its strengths and its weaknesses, and who would want, I am sure, to say more about it on third reading.

As the Liberal House Leader has done, I want to recognize the hard work of my colleague and friend, the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon), who worked very hard in

the House and in the legislative committee on Bill C-110. In fact, he had the satisfaction at report stage of having the Minister of State for Finance recognize the close attention that he had paid to this Bill and the work he had done trying to ensure that the Bill to establish the Canadian International Trade Tribunal would be an effective piece of legislation. May I say on his behalf, Mr. Speaker, in focusing my comments more particularly on the Bill, that in principle the proposal to roll together three different tribunals into one can be seen as a good thing. The Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor would want to give his support in principle to putting these several bodies—The Tariff Board, the Textile and Clothing Board, and the Special Import Tribunal—together, to reorganizing them as the new Canadian International Trade Tribunal. That ought to be a good thing, but the question is whether in fact the Bill as it stands is a good thing, and whether the kinds of powers that have been assigned to this new tribunal, the composition of the tribunal, and the procedures that it is expected to follow in their individuality and totality would make an effective board. On behalf of my colleague and our caucus I want to say that we do not think it will be effective. We have very serious concerns about several aspects of the Bill and about the tribunal that it will create, if the Bill is finally passed, given Royal Assent, and proclaimed.

In my own observation one concern raised is the matter of easy access. The tribunal dealing with the textile and clothing board has been noted for its easy access. The textile and clothing board has existed to ensure that agreements dating back to the early 1960s in the clothing trade, which take the form these days of multi-fibre agreements with various Third World producing countries, and their impact on Canadian manufacturers are properly administered and that those industries are safe. The ease of access to the board has been one of its most important features.

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Both textiles and apparel producers of Canada and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, which speaks for far more of Canada's manufacturers, have expressed concern that the new tribunal will not provide this ease of access. One can see on the very face of it that with three tribunals and 15 members, even now the procedures are all too slow. If we move to a new structure with only nine members with far more responsibilities than the three different boards now existing have, there will be grave concerns about whether the new International Trade Tribunal will be able to work effectively and to respond to the concerns of industry as surely we would want that tribunal to do.

What makes this particularly ironic is that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) himself, in a press release in Sherbrooke, Eastern Townships, the heart of some of Canada's most important textile and clothing producing areas, promised a greater role to the industry in shaping textile and apparel policy. Yet the legislation, Bill C-110, does away with a board which has played such an important part in studying the