

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, when the House rose for lunch at one o'clock, I was stating that the minister is proposing to rationalize the textile and clothing industries at a very unfortunate time. In December, 538,000 persons were unemployed, of whom 200,000 are in the province of Quebec. When the figures are released for January, I am certain they will indicate that substantially more than 600,000 are unemployed. I am certain that the unemployment figures for February and March will be in the neighbourhood of 750,000.

Mr. Anderson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have no wish to interrupt the hon. member's interesting remarks. I am wondering whether we should continue without any representation by the official opposition.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Anderson: I understand they are interested in this debate. However, they have yet to appear.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. That is hardly a point of order. We have a quorum in the House. All members are equal.

Mr. Orlikow: These two industries are very heavily concentrated in the province of Quebec. The latest figures which I have been able to obtain with regard to companies which employ 20 or more workers are for September 1970. In September 1970, 66,220 workers were employed in the textile industry of whom 37,253, or 56 per cent, were employed in the province of Quebec. In the clothing industry, 87,559 people were employed, of whom 56,516, or 64.5 per cent were employed in the province of Quebec. Any proposals to rationalize these industries which may lead to dislocation and unemployment, either temporarily or permanently, are extremely important, particularly with regard to the province of Quebec. In view of the heavy unemployment in the province of Quebec, it is not surprising that the government will do all that it can to make this change as orderly as possible.

As I said earlier, we do not think that tariffs, the traditional method of maintaining an industry or quotas which exclude imports, will succeed. We support the general policy of encouraging imports in all fields, as well as the principle of rationalization. We have always taken that view.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hogarth: There he is with all his friends.

Mr. Orlikow: When there is a reduction in employment and a dislocation of industry caused by deliberate poli-

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cies and plans, we feel that the workers directly and adversely affected should not be expected to carry the brunt of that dislocation. The minister, who was actively engaged in working out the auto pact between Canada and the United States, will recall that was precisely the view we took. While we welcomed the proposal for the pact, we were very critical of the weaknesses of the provisions in that agreement which resulted in workers being laid off, either temporarily or permanently. We took a dim view of the reduction in employment of rail workers. In many cases, these employees were forced out of work or found it necessary to move to another city or province. I was very critical of the government and Air Canada when the overhaul base was moved from Winnipeg to Dorval.

• (2:10 p.m.)

This being the case, I could not help but read with a good deal of satisfaction and approval the proposals made by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin), and particularly the proposals made by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey), to deal with workers who are laid off or adversely affected by the rationalization of the textile and clothing industries which is to take place. I must say I was a little surprised we should have been given a speech by the Minister of Labour. I do not know why the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce or the Minister of Manpower (Mr. Lang), who is much more closely involved with manpower programs, could not have made that speech, except that the Minister of Manpower comes from Saskatchewan and not from Quebec which will be much more seriously affected by what is proposed. If I am wrong, the minister will not hesitate to correct me.

I will put on record what the Minister of Labour said it was proposed to do for textile workers who will be adversely affected. I do so because I want to commend him for what he has done. I quote from the notes of the minister's speech as circularized—the words are not exactly as they will appear in *Hansard*, but I cannot help that. The statement reads:

First, for all workers, regardless of age, who are in receipt of unemployment insurance benefits and who have a clearly established attachment to the industries, there will be a supplementary benefit which, when added to the benefits available under the unemployment insurance system, will provide for a total benefit, to a maximum of \$100 per week, of two-thirds of previous income from employment in the industries.

Second, for workers who are over 54 at the date of lay-off there will be a pre-retirement benefit amounting to 50 per cent of previous earnings payable after the unemployment benefits have been exhausted and, if need be, until age 65 when entitlement to benefit under Canada pension and old age security plans begins.

Initially, the maximum payment under the pre-retirement benefit will be \$75 per week.

The minister went on to say that this would be adjusted on the basis of the cost of living.

I want to commend the government for this step. We have been asking for many years that workers or farmers whose income is adversely affected by government policies—policies which may be very worthwhile for the