

*Government Orders*

We would agree that some of the objectives the government outlines in promoting the legislation are laudable and worthy of support. We are sorely lacking in those areas that address a longer term and broader strategic manufacturing strategy. We have not addressed it at all. We are missing another great opportunity to do something for Canadians everywhere. We are missing another opportunity to enhance the manufacturing sector. We are missing a golden opportunity to provide an environment whereby we can create a greater number of jobs.

• (1305)

**Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Meritt):** Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few remarks on the record. It will not take long.

The bill has to be looked at in the over-all context of what it is doing or what it will continue to do to the textile industry. When we look at the bill, we have to separate the two sections of it dealing with the clothing industry and the textile industry. I believe this particular case is a continuation of what started with the free trade agreement and the dissolution or the erosion of the foundation of the textile industry.

Clothing manufacturers have said that they feel by moving more rapidly than set out in the bill with the breakdown of the tariffs they would be more competitive in the over-all market. Yet on the other hand the textile industry is saying that while it does not necessarily disagree with the tariffs being dropped, it should be phased and loaded in on the other end as opposed to the front end loading of the tariff reduction.

It is interesting to note the employment figures since the free trade agreement was instituted in 1989. Total employment in the Canadian garment industry back in 1988 was 95,800. In 1992 employment had fallen to 62,300. Those are Statistics Canada figures. They are of some concern to our party with respect to the employment aspect.

The minister knows well what has occurred. Often we are hurrying a process. Instead of trying to find a cure for the ills, we are saying let us amputate and see whether we grow back the appendages we have amputated.

Let us look at the over-all manufacturing sector and what has happened to that sector with the realignment through the free trade agreement. We have looked at that amputation as opposed to looking at how we move our industries into a point of international competition so there is the least amount of damage done to the employment base and to families throughout Canada.

I do not think we have looked at that. It is another example of where we have moved the textile industry out. Once again it is often at the expense of women with low end wages, people who have worked hard and do work hard in trying to keep their families together. They are looking at how they are going to get their next dollar. From those Statistics Canada figures we have seen a fairly major drop in employment within the textile industry. That in itself causes a problem within the legislation and causes a problem for the employment base of the textile industry.

We also have to look at the over-all bill itself and exactly what it does. It phases in tariff reductions at the rate of 1.5 per cent per year rather than the recommended 1 per cent in the Canadian International Trade Tribunal recommendations, speeding it up as opposed to back end loading it as requested by the textile industry.

• (1310)

Also, under this bill it would treat specialty textiles and certain lightweight wool fabrics in the same manner as other fibres, yarns and fabrics. That is the tariffs would be reduced a maximum 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 16 per cent respectively. Currently these tariffs are on average 8 per cent, 13 per cent, 18 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. This legislation would maintain the margin of tariff preference for trade with Australia, New Zealand and six tariff items in which there is significant trade.

Clause 1 would implement proposed tariff cuts through an amendment to the Customs Tariff which strikes out a series of existing textile tariffs itemed in schedule I and replaces these with a new set of reduced textile tariffs for goods entitled the most favoured nation and British preferential tariff.

We have to look more broadly at the bill in analysing it and asking where it is leading us and what it is doing. It seems to me that this once again is simply tied in with the