

*Textile and Clothing Board Act*

producers may have had to close their shops, although the bill provides for interim recommendations to the minister if the board feels the situation is at a critical stage.

• (3:10 p.m.)

My main point is that the bill establishing this board should have been introduced years ago. I am not opposed to it, but it should have been brought forward about five years ago. We are five years too late in bringing forward the bill. We now know the problems. I will follow the progress of the bill more actively in the committee. I urge the government finally to do something to help the textile industry. Let us not have this pussy-footing around, this business of going back to the textile industry and trying to find out exactly what they want. We know what they want so let us make specific recommendations. My criticism of this bill is that it has come five years too late and that a forward-looking government should have introduced it earlier.

[Translation]

**Mr. Arthur Portelance (Gamelin):** Mr. Speaker, in October last, at the opening of the third session, one of the 68 bills put on the order paper was entitled: "Bill respecting textiles". What the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) did recently, which is now taking form, is certainly going to help one of the most important industries in Canada, one which creates a great many jobs and assuredly deserves a better protection in many fields.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Ricard) charged the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce of having taken far too much time in bringing in such legislation. He even went so far as to say that nothing had been done since 1968.

Already back in 1968 or at the beginning of 1969, the hon. Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce announced the establishment of a special committee which was to study the textile problems. The members of this committee had to meet several persons interested, that is union and management representatives, in short, all those who are more or less concerned with textiles. Moreover, the manufacturers were complaining about the number of shirts entering the country and apparently according to statistics, quotas were being largely exceeded. I shall come back later on this matter.

As the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Ricard) gave us various figures, I shall take this opportunity to say that some 190,000 people are presently working in the textile industry. In Quebec, several factories—

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I regret that I must interrupt the talk-fest to my right. It is very difficult to follow the remarks of the hon. member who has the floor.

**Mr. McCleave:** The insensitive technocrats are doing it.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** They are not usually here on Friday afternoon.

[Mr. Comeau.]

[Translation]

**Mr. Portelance:** Mr. Speaker, I intend to be brief.

Naturally, such concerns are efficiently administered by directors who have succeeded in making the adjustments required to face strong competition, and who have endeavoured to sell their products in all commercial centres of Canada and other countries.

As the minister stated last night, in the field of men's clothing, sales to the United States have increased, but the duties on such goods are less than on shirts exported to the same country.

Statistics for 1966 show that Canada was allowed to import goods up to a value of \$19.32 per capita. In the United Kingdom, the figure was \$10.89 and in the United States, \$6.07. This proves that three times more textile products and clothing were imported from other countries than from the United States, and even that the United States rate of imports was much lower than ours. Last year, the Mills Bill was proposed in the United States. This bill aimed at restricting imports through the strict enforcement of a global system of quotas. The American importers associations have stated that the application of quotas, without proof of prejudice, is completely contrary to everything that the American trade policy stood for in the past.

I feel that this bill is not as stringent and that it will be more favourably received than the one proposed in the United States. Just as some Canadian associations, Canadian importers seemed to fear it and were opposed to the passing of such a law here. Last Thursday, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) met with them in Montreal and was able to further inform them. In this respect, one newspaper reported the following:

As regards the textile and clothing industry, Mr. Pepin has made it clear that the legislation introduced in the House last week and aimed at establishing a Textile and Clothing Board is unique in the entire trade community of the free world. He added, as pointed out moreover by the *Wall Street Journal*, that this step could very well serve as an example to others, in order to improve the situation as a whole in the world textile trade.

Therefore, as far as the Canadian industry is concerned, something new has at least been created and the companies as well as those interested in the textile industry will certainly be asked to be also creative in their respective field.

Canadian primary textile plants employed 54,300 workers in Quebec, 37,300 in Ontario and 2,400 in the Western provinces—in 122 plants—and 1,100 workers in the Maritime provinces.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Approximately 102,000 persons were employed in the manufacture of clothing and related products and thus, since concentration is in Quebec and in Montreal, there were 62,000 persons there employed in 1,540 plants. In Ontario, there were 24,000 workers employed in this industry and in the Western provinces 11,000. In the Atlantic provinces, the figure was 500. As I believe other speakers have mentioned and technologically Canada's