

board which affects all Canadians—the consumers—whereas boards such as the Wheat Board primarily deal with export rather than the import trade. I do not feel we would set a particular precedent so far as boards are concerned.

If it were decided to have regional representation, the Governor in Council should make the appointments, without reference necessarily to any provincial government involved.

Honourable senators, if we are a free trade nation or endeavouring to reach that stage, it is particularly important for the Prairie region. If trade is a two-way street, we must put all decisions on that basis. Western Canada survives only on the export trade. As our export commodities to Japan total in the neighbourhood of \$1,500 million, and as we export to other Pacific Rim countries as well, we must expect that we have to spend heavily on importing from those countries. Under today's system some of our tariffs go up to 50 per cent on imports from those countries.

Recently, there has been a surtax of \$2 on shirts. This has had the effect of restricting the balance of trade in the areas in which we do business in the world. It has also increased considerably the cost of living to our consumers. The clothing and textile industry has other protections. There are quota policies, and regional incentives and industrial incentives to protect that industry.

This bill concerns me for another reason. The minister in charge and the government in power may lay the blame for additional restrictive policies on the doorstep of the Textile and Clothing Board, and not take the blame themselves. If this is the purpose in setting up the board, then it is being set up under false pretences. On the other hand, if it really will view the problems of the industry, if it will view the regional differences and keep the consumers' interest at heart at all times, this board will be of value. I would hope that when this board is established it will act in the interests of all Canadians, and to effect that end it must have representation from all of Canada.

It is also stated in the bill that the head office of the board shall be in the national capital region. I am at a loss to know why bills presented to this house should state definitely by legislation that such boards will be located in the national capital. The obvious inference to be drawn from such a statement in a piece of legislation is that the national capital region is the only part of Canada where any board should be located. And if you doubt the logic of that statement, let me point out that of the 50 existing crown corporations and agencies, 46 are located in the national capital region. Surely, if we are going to talk decentralization in Canada the time to do so is when these bills come before this house. Surely the pertinent portion of the bill could say that the head office is to be designated by the Governor in Council, so that it could be decided outside the scope of legislation itself just where the best place would be to locate the head office.

In this particular instance, in my opinion, there is no particular need to locate the board in the national capital

region. There are other areas in Canada where the textile industry is of importance and where a head office could quite appropriately be located. In saying that I am not in any way suggesting that the head office should be located in the Prairies or in western Canada. I am simply saying it could be located in one of a number of other areas of Canada. Especially in this age of computers and of telex and of direct line telephones, with the air line services we have, there is no longer the need of having head offices located in the national capital region. At any rate, I certainly think the committee, when it studies this measure, should give this particular part of the bill due consideration.

The textile industry is admittedly a slow-growing industry which is not in particularly good condition at the present time, but by no means has it been the slowest-growing industry in this country. Between 1964 and 1969 employment in the textile industry has gone up 4 per cent. Compared to that, employment in the agricultural industry has gone down 30 per cent. Agricultural output has been increased by 31 per cent. Compared to that, the output in all other industries has increased only 21 per cent. The per person output in agriculture has increased 67 per cent whereas in other industries it has increased by only 27.5 per cent.

Have we as Canadians looked at and compared all industries when we consider legislation to protect one particular industry?

We have for years protected Canadian industries under tariffs, import restrictions, surtaxes and agreements, and it would appear to me that this bill is designed to give even greater protection to the particular industry with which it deals. But in the interval and particularly at this time we have little or no protection for the most important industry in western Canada and, indeed, one of the most important industries of our country, namely agriculture. Agriculture deals internationally. It is difficult, of course, to have regulations on exports, but if the citizens and consumers of Canada pay a fair and reasonable price for their other products, particularly textile and clothing products, then surely the Canadian people should be and would be prepared to pay a fair price for agricultural commodities consumed in their own country.

Agriculture in the last short while has taken a back seat to our other industries. The drop in the exchange rate reduced the net farm income to the agricultural community by 25 per cent, while the drop in the international wheat agreement cost the industry 20 per cent. Meanwhile, costs of production over the last three years have increased by 21 per cent. It is hard to understand and equally hard to explain to these primary producers why there should be a surcharge of \$2 on a shirt. If this board is only a stepping-stone in the formulation of a policy of protection for other industries—and I am sure the shoe industry and other industries will very shortly be at the Government's door asking for similar types of review board—then I think such a review board in looking at other industries in Canada should certainly not forget the industry that is so important to our primary producers of the west. If we are prepared to pay up to 50 per cent import duties plus surtax on products other than