

*Textile and Clothing Board Act*

**Mr. Ricard:** Mr. Speaker, this government cannot make us forget that they did not discharge their responsibilities.

**Mr. Pepin:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the member was not in office as a minister very long. Had he acquired more experience, it would come in handy at this time.

**Mr. Ricard:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but say that the hon. minister is showing his true colors. I prefer not to make any remarks akin to his.

It is tragic indeed to note from statistics that because of this ineffective, unimaginative and irresponsible government, 52 shirt factories had to shut down over recent years.

**Mr. Comeau:** That is terrible!

**Mr. Ricard:** Of this number, Mr. Speaker, 46 were located in the province of Quebec.

Are we not right in raising our voices in trying to somehow wake-up the government which is running the affairs of this country and in this period of unemployment which we are now going through to plead the cause of all the unemployed? If we dare do it we are exposed to the kind of ungracious remarks as were directed to me by the Minister a while ago.

**Mr. Pepin:** The hon. member is touchy today!

**Mr. Ricard:** I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that I am doing my duty and that I honour my commitments towards my constituents and towards all those workers who are engaged in the textile industry. I ask the Minister and the government to assume their responsibilities, to see that all the victims of the carelessness and the ineffectiveness of our leaders are treated fairly and are provided with employment. Charity is not what they want. They want an opportunity to earn an honest living. But this is a right which the government denies its citizens. This is deplorable and those who are responsible for it can certainly not take pride in it.

Let the government take its responsibilities, let it discharge its duties as promised and give work to those who simply want to earn an honest living.

[*English*]

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes a number of steps to deal with two industries, the textile industry and the clothing industry, both of which have been and are in considerable difficulty. These are both industries which are "labour intense", inasmuch as a large part of the cost of the product is represented by wages paid to the workers who produce the materials or the finished clothing products. These industries are under tremendous pressure from imports from other countries such as Japan, Taiwan and mainland China. Those are countries in which the wage rate is substantially lower than the wage rate for similar work in Canada. There has been, therefore, over a number of years a great dislocation in these industries. There have

[Mr. Pepin.]

been tremendous losses to employers. In addition, there has been a loss of jobs and workers in both industries have been paid low wages. We recognize the difficulties the industries face. We recognize the difficulties faced by the workers in those two industries. To the extent that the provisions of the bill, if implemented, will help the industry and the workers, we support this bill which has been proposed by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin).

We recognize, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the traditional methods of coping with the difficulties of the industries have failed and will fail. We do not believe, as was believed by those of former generations and by former governments, Liberal and Conservative, that the solution to the problems of the industry and the problems of the workers in these industries lies in increasing trade barriers, in increasing tariffs and in imposing quotas. Such actions, Mr. Speaker, would not bring solutions for the difficulties of these industries any more than they would bring solutions for the difficulties of any industries.

We recognize, Mr. Speaker, that, since we are selling more and more of our industrial products to countries like Japan, Taiwan and mainland China, we must be prepared to trade with those countries and to purchase goods produced in those countries. We must do that if we are to continue successfully the pursuit of our objective of selling increased quantities of Canadian products, whether they be iron ore, nickel, copper or coal. Already we have been selling increasing quantities of wheat to these countries. As I say, we must be prepared to purchase the goods produced in those countries. We, therefore, support the trading policies which the government has adopted. We support the views of concern which the government is expressing about the plight of the textile and clothing industries of this country, and the plight of the workers in those industries who are being adversely affected by the increased amounts of textiles and clothing products coming into this country. So, in a general way as well as on principle, we support the objectives of this bill.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, we wish to point out to the minister and to the government that the kind of proposal being made by the government cannot operate in a vacuum. The rationalization of the textile industry will be difficult; indeed, I will say that it will be impossible in a period of major unemployment. May I remind the minister that in December, 1970, the last month for which there are figures, 538,000 people were unemployed in Canada. I am certain that when the figures for January are published they will indicate that at least 100,000 more people were unemployed than in December. Forty per cent of the unemployed in Canada are looking for work in the province of Quebec. More than 200,000 were unemployed in Quebec in December, last year. We are talking about two industries, the textile and clothing industries, which are very heavily concentrated in Quebec.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** One o'clock.