

we shall judge on the basis of the decisions which are made. We shall certainly wish to examine from time to time the programs which are instituted as a result of these proposals in order that we may properly take into account the various interests with which I have attempted to deal this afternoon. On this basis, we are prepared to support third reading of the bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Romuald Rodrigue (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out the importance of this bill without however taking up too much of the time of the House.

I believe the bill to establish a textile and clothing board will certainly help solve some of the problems now confronting textile and clothing manufacturers, especially with regard to the marketing of their products.

The industry in general and the representatives of labour unions have welcomed this bill whose purpose is neither to help the textile industry financially nor to grant it the monopoly of the Canadian market, but rather to organize meetings with the representatives of the industry and find out what the real problems are.

I feel that the real purpose of the board will be to advise the government with regard to imports, especially when these tend to flood the market with low-cost products, or to lead to practices for avoiding duty and excise tax.

Although that board must not be endowed with absolute powers, I would hope that further to serious investigations, corrective measures could be brought about in order to improve the situation which we have known for some years.

The textile industry in Canada is one of the most important with respect to production, employment and investment in that sector of the industry. It would therefore be unthinkable that a country like Canada be deprived of an industry such as textiles, an industry with a high productivity, centered on investment and technology and one like which all modern countries would like to have.

In any modern country, consumption of textile products is an indication of the standard of living of the people and of the extent of the industrialization of its economy.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Canada is a country where consumption of clothing as well as household textile products of all kinds is very high. Prosperous countries are highly industrialized. That is why they use also large quantities of packing material, bags, insulating products, transmission belts, tire canvas, upholstery for automobiles and a number of other special industrial products which the textile industry can provide.

Textile products are essential in the life of a modern people. It is not surprising, therefore, that Canadians are among the largest users of textile products in the world.

In Canada, textile products purchased in a year average more than 33 pounds per capita. These products are

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made up of natural and synthetic fibres; about 40 per cent are used for clothing; about 31 per cent for industrial products; and 29 per cent for household articles. Second to the United States, Canada has the largest average consumption of textile products in the world.

For the Canadian people, the main and most reliable source of textile products, remains its national industry which produces clothing, knitted goods and a large number of household and industrial products. The latter are generally used to supply material to other industrial sectors for further processing.

Canadian textile factories are located in the industrial areas of Quebec and Ontario, close to the market, but the industry is nevertheless spread out from coast to coast, and more than 80,000 Canadians, or 6 per cent of the total labour force in the manufacturing sector, earn their living in the manufacturing of textile products.

According to an economic study, each job in the manufacturing sector creates work for 1.17 persons more in the sectors of supplies, services, maintenance, repairs, etc. So, the textile industry provides jobs for close to 175,000 workers, who, in turn, support families representing over half a million people. The best conditions for efficiency in the textile industry do not necessarily imply large production units. However, a large part of the total textile production in Canada is concentrated in order to allow a maximum scale of production under the present conditions of the Canadian market.

The annual production in Canada exceeds \$1.8 billion, which shows the importance of the Canadian textile industry which no longer has to prove the top quality of its production. This industry, as well as the ready-to-wear industry, is endowed with a technology as advanced and as efficient as in any other country in the world. The Canadian section of the National Industrial Conference Board stated, and I quote:

This is a sophisticated and progressive industry whose technical efficiency leaves nothing to be desired compared with similar industries in North America, meaning the whole world. Its management is enlightened, the quality of its products is superior and its prices are maintained at a very low level, taking into account the salary scale in North America and the special demands of the Canadian market.

The enormous investments made by the manufacturers of textile products demonstrate the willingness of the industry to remain always ahead of progress. Presently, and for the last twelve years, the textile industry has spent about \$100 million per year to renew its machinery and equipment.

Not only is the computer more and more widely used in production control, but the Canadian textile industry owns some pieces of equipment found nowhere else in America.

This concern for up-to-dateness obviously gave tangible results. The rate of production has increased faster in the textile field than in most other industrial sectors in Canada, by about 6 per cent, for a good number of years.

Canadian textile mills sell around 90 per cent of their production on domestic markets; this is why we should try to protect part of those domestic markets for