

Adjournment Debate

While speaking of the Canadian forces in the Middle East, I would like to take the opportunity to mention that early in the new year service women, approximately 50 in number, will be joining the Canadian contingent at Ismailia, the headquarters of the UN forces in the Middle East. They will be employed in supporting tasks such as teletype operators and supply technicians. The minister has also recently announced that the ceiling on the number of women in the forces has been removed and they are eligible for 82 of the 121 existing trades and classifications. In effect, the only trades precluded to women are those in the category of seagoing duties, isolated postings and combat roles.

It should also be noted that women in the forces are paid similar rates as men and officers and that they enjoy the same leave and mess privileges. These facts make a mockery of the uninformed and vindictive remarks the hon. member made in this House during the question period this afternoon.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I should like to enter a caveat at this point. I will rise on a question of privilege in the House tomorrow. What the parliamentary secretary has said should be withdrawn, as he knows it is absolutely untrue.

INDUSTRY—TEXTILES—REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT AID TO
INDUSTRY

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, on Friday of last week I asked if the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) was considering immediate action to bolster the Canadian textile industry. Four weeks ago the hon. member for Drummond (Mr. Pinard), when pointing out to the minister the lay-offs in the textile industry, was advised that eight or nine textile products were to be referred to the Textile and Clothing Board for urgent examination. The same subject was raised the following day and again two days later when, in reply to a question from the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), the minister said:

● (2210)

I am not aware of any dumping at present or undervaluation of imports.

He did admit to being aware of distress selling on the part of foreign producers of textiles and that this was seriously affecting the prospects of the Canadian textile industry. On November 1, the newspaper *La Presse* reported:

[*Translation*]

The Canadian textile industry is in a very bad way. In the last six months, 4,000 layoffs have been registered throughout Canada. In Quebec alone, 1,300 workers lost their work during this period.

... in the last eight months, the government has relaxed its quota policy for imports.

In a telegram sent to the Prime Minister of Canada... the Canadian Federation of Textile Workers... requested immediate action on the part of the government to protect the textile industry which, directly and indirectly, provides 100,000 jobs in Canada.

[*English*]

Today, the minister stated that he had met with the Textile and Clothing Board and expected to have more to

[Mr. Hopkins.]

say at the end of this week. I would remind the minister that action is already too late for many in the industry who are facing a bleak Christmas without employment. In my constituency of Vaudreuil a huge construction project by the Dupont Company, worth in excess of \$40 million, is now in jeopardy. It should be unnecessary to point out that such a construction program has an impact upon the Canadian economy many times greater than the 1,000 or so jobs that would be directly created.

I cannot miss this opportunity to point out that this particular project was conceived without any financial assistance from the federal government. Its viability was directly related to profits in the industry. More than 100,000 persons, or 6 per cent of all manufacturing workers in Canada, earn their livelihood producing textiles; 50,000 of these employees are located in Quebec. In the province of Quebec, the industry is the third largest employer of labour. The gross value of production of the industry exceeds \$2.5 billion. Capital investment by the industry over the past decade has exceeded \$1.5 billion. Annual wages total over \$600 million. About 80 per cent of the industry is Canadian-owned.

During the past three months there has been a rapid and continuing increase, week by week, of lay-offs in the industry for indefinite periods, declining hours of work, uneconomic levels of capacity utilization and a reversal of planned investment decisions made earlier. The industry's share of the Canadian market has declined steadily and imports now account for more than half of all the textile products sold in Canada. Voluntary export restraints or quotas are applicable to less than 10 per cent of total imports. Canada should not be made to suffer for the volatile nature of production and trade in textile products and distress selling caused by the lack of planning and control by other countries.

Our relatively generous import policies must not be used to make us the disposal ground of the world in times of crisis. Unco-ordinated, erratic, insensitive imports are adding substantially to the confusion. Unless action is taken—and rapidly—permanent, irreparable damage will be caused. The Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin made a statement on textile policies on May 14, 1970, when he was minister of industry, trade and commerce. In part, he said:

The government will be prepared, in cases of serious injury from "low cost" imports, to accord special protection—unilaterally when necessary—in order to facilitate adjustment to or strengthening of the more viable lines of production.

Mr. Speaker, that action is absolutely essential today.

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, the minister met with the labour-management committee of the Canadian textile industry on November 15, 1974, to obtain first-hand knowledge of the situation. Following this meeting he requested the Textile and Clothing Board to undertake concurrent inquiries into the following products identified by the committee as being the most seriously affected by imports: broadwoven man-made filament fabrics; double knit and warp knit fabrics; polyester filament yarn; polyester-cotton fabrics, and worsted fabrics. He requested that the board present the results of its inquiries and any recommendations as soon as possible because of the urgency of the situation.