

advantage must be given to Canadian industry. Canada imports three times as many textile products as do the Americans, and twice as many as the British. This was the case from 1954 to 1967 and the situation has worsened since then. From 1954 to 1967 there was a 146 per cent increase in the amount of textiles and clothing imported into Canada.

The United States, Mr. Speaker, has decided to set quotas on textiles imported from Japan, but we have not; we have allowed matters to drag along; we have been the nice guys, and even where we did set quotas we told exporting countries, "If you exceed your quota we will not hurt you." The consequences of this massive importation are dislocation of production programs, restriction in the development of certain lines, costly diversification of production, abandonment of a number of lines and dislocation of the labour force in the Canadian textile industry. From 1966 to 1968 the Canadian textile labour force decreased by 4,000, and the situation has become worse since then. What can be done, Mr. Speaker? There are a number of solutions. The most effective one would be to limit importations. Quotas should be set and adhered to. If we set quotas for a particular country, we should not allow it to exceed those quotas. On the other hand, we could favour the synthetic sector in respect of which demand and production are increasing.

Is enough research being carried out in this field? The science report, although not dealing specifically with the textile field, clearly indicates that Canada has a below average industrial research and development output. Perhaps we could specialize our trade to lines in which we can compete. It is felt that action has to be taken by the Canadian government since the U.S. example shows the difficulties involved in trying to find bilateral solutions. A target could be set stipulating that 70 per cent of the Canadian market must be supplied by Canadian manufacturers, with the other 30 per cent being supplied by imports.

The solutions proposed by the federal government were announced on May 14, 1970, in the minister's statement on motions, to which I replied. They include nationalization of textile tariffs, improved methods of investigating dumped or subsidized textile imports, amendments to the Customs Act and the Statistics Act, creation of a textile review board, financial support for industries wanting to improve, increased or diversified production, financial assistance for affected workers, technical and promotional support through development and productivity centres, and a fashion design assistance program.

Bill C-215 which we are discussing, which is to establish a textile and clothing board and to make certain amendments to other acts, deals with some of the solutions proposed on May 14. I hope it works; I hope it will be effective. The bill will create the board, it indicates how it will work; it will provide for assistance to workers; it will amend the Export and Import Permits Act to control imports, and it will amend the Customs Act. The proposed board will look into the importation of textiles and clothing goods to determine if importation is threatening production in Canada. The board will either receive complaints from Canadian producers or open an

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inquiry on its own initiative. Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed to the creation of the board, but I point out that it will simply make recommendations to the minister and then the governor in council will decide to restrain, and to what extent, the importation of one or a number of textile products.

The board may do other things. It may ask or receive from a producer of textiles a plan indicating how he intends to improve, change or modify his production in order to meet international competition. My comment is that the minister has stated many times that the problem is not efficiency; some of our plants are as modern as can be. If they are already modern, how can we improve them? We know where the problem lies. There is no need for the government to talk for the hundredth time to the textile industry in order to come up with recommendations. The minister and the government know where the problems are.

I have talked about what will happen once the lay-offs occur. The shame of it is that the government recognizes that lay-offs will occur, and so far as I am concerned the government wants them to occur. At present we do not know how the proposed program will work or what amount of money will be necessary to finance it. According to what the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) said today, this will be worked out in regulations which have not yet been promulgated.

If we consider the way workers are protected under the automotive agreement, we can see it is far ahead of what is provided for textile workers. I have here a copy of the transitional assistance benefit regulations covering automotive workers, but we do not know what the regulations will be for textile workers. Before we know what regulations the Minister of Labour will adopt, it is difficult to say if the program will be of any use. We must also remember that textile manufacturers are located in low employment regions and we do not know what measures will be undertaken to create other jobs.

Evidently, all this is consistent with the policy of the government to recognize that lay-offs and unemployment must occur because of changes in the textile industry. This is due to lack of planning. No decisions with regard to the textile industry must be taken before the board has determined for what period of time, and in what groups, lay-offs will occur. Textile workers are a group of specialists and cannot easily adapt to a new occupation in another field. If the government is of the opinion that there is no future for our textile industry, let it say so; let us not pussy-foot around. Canada could well specialize its production in another field, such as synthetics, and completely abandon wool and cotton production. Maybe this is what we should be doing. If it is, the government should say so.

Some people argue that the board is not necessary. The Importers' Association of Canada is against it, and for obvious reasons. Others consider that it is not necessary because we already know what the situation is. We have all the necessary statistics from the DBS and other groups in order to make the right decision on the importation of textiles, without the establishment of this board. Before the board makes recommendations, the concerned