

Supply

are women, in most cases with little education, often because they did not have the opportunity to attend school very long. In the Eastern Townships, we often see people aged 42 or 43 in these industries because they have had to start working very young to support their family. In view of the situation, it is silly to concentrate on a single aspect of the problem when we are speaking about these issues, whether we are dealing with the footwear, the textile or the clothing industry. All aspects should always be considered if we sincerely and honestly want to solve the problems which exist in these traditional sectors. We must never forget that this issue involves our regional development policy. The issue also has an extremely important social aspect in the case of the workers whom I have already described. There is also the whole context of international competition from imports.

Mr. Speaker, to come back to what the Gaucher-Pringle report said at the time, it was necessary to get out of these sectors, to diversify into much stronger industries, and the situation is the same here as elsewhere. The report also mentioned high technology and the fact that something had to be done to stop the region as a whole from depending completely on traditional employment sector.

Mr. Speaker, as most Members of this House, I believe, I was fascinated by the reaction which followed the decision made by the Government, and I would like to examine this reaction briefly. The Manufacturers Association squarely stated that it would mean the death of the industry. As for the Retailers Association, its members agree with the decision, they approve of it and some of them even go further. Even after the announcement of the decision made by the Government, certain retailers believe that the Government will do more, and I would like to quote from an article in *The Globe and Mail* of Thursday, November 21, 1985:

[English]

A spokesman for the Canadian Importers Association said he is afraid that the Government may have a hidden agenda that will see the inevitable surge in imports following the end of quotas used as an excuse to slap them on once again.

[Translation]

The Consumers' Association of Canada, on its part, agrees with the decision. If we look at our trading partners, we see that the Americans who supply only 4 per cent of the shoes consumed in Canada and the European Economic Community which accounts for 60 per cent of our imports of ladies and girls shoes, indicated that they intend to retaliate. In this context, Mr. Speaker, the motion of my hon. colleague and the reaction of the Official Opposition did not surprise me. On this side of the House, we are used since September, since November 1985, since we are sitting, to seeing the opposition Parties systematically take views opposed to ours. Frankly, we are sorry to see them contribute so little to this debate. Today's situation is not uncommon. They are only doing what they have always done. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I would like to

draw your attention on the reaction of editorialists, because it is even more interesting.

Frédéric Wagnière, in the Thursday, November 21 issue of *La Presse*, says:

Finally, Ottawa has decided to save the Canadian shoe industry.

And he concludes:

Ottawa is only taking a decision which is in the interest of the whole country and it is now up to the shoe industry to stand up on its own without any help from the Government or the consumers.

In the Friday, November 22 issue of *The Gazette*, we read:

● (1620)

[English]

But the government made the right decision, hard though it was.

[Translation]

Also in *The Gazette* dated November 22, Don McGillivray, political analyst for Southam News, was writing:

[English]

The Tory government has done the right thing—and a brave thing—in deciding to phase out shoe import quotas.

[Translation]

In *The Ottawa Citizen* dated November 22, it was stated:

[English]

But abolishing footwear import quotas will benefit consumers—and the industry itself.

[Translation]

In *The Gazette* dated November 23, Marie-Josée Drouin, a respected and well-known economist, also wrote that the Government has made a sound decision.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully submit that there must be something unusual because the Canadian Manufacturers' Association has said publicly: This will be the death of the industry. Consumers think that we have made a fine decision. On the one hand, all the editorials which we have read until now say that it is a good decision. On the other hand, the unions say that it is a bad decision which will kill the industry.

I think that all the Members of this House, under these circumstances, should ask themselves serious questions. How is it that on one single issue, people can hold so divergent views? I for one, Mr. Speaker, do not pretend to know everything from instinct, but I will honestly and sincerely say that the decision made by the Government, if I only consider the interests of my riding and its residents, is not exactly what I would have liked myself. When we have such immediate interests, Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to take the opposite view. With that in mind, I promised during the election campaign and subsequently to meet with the people and to tell them I would uphold their views with the decision-makers. On that point, Mr. Speaker, I will say that I am not going to wait until this coming December 4 to meet with the footwear employees who will come to Ottawa. Contrary to others, I have met with