

endeavour to reduce imports from cheap-labour countries, the result will be 20,000 new jobs.

It seems capital to me, Mr. Speaker, that this government should take the necessary steps not only to preserve but also increase employment in this country.

Again in the imports field, Mr. Speaker, in 1954, Japan exported 2 million pounds of textile products to Canada while in 1967, those exports rose to 37 million pounds.

In 1954, we imported one million pounds of those products from Eastern Europe, while in 1967 those imports rose to 20 million pounds.

Again in 1954, other countries exported to Canada half a million pounds of textile products while in 1967 those imports reached 15 million pounds.

Let us not look further, Mr. Speaker, for the cause of the uneasiness in the textile industry. Excessive imports are detrimental to our workers.

Nylon yarn which sells in Japan at \$2.20 a pound is sold here at 80¢ a pound. Is that not enough, Mr. Speaker, to convince the minister of the need to take the measures that would put an end as soon as possible to that situation? I repeat what I have already said, Mr. Speaker: I believe that the establishment of this Board responsible for studying yarns and imports is useless. We will not oppose it, however, in case the government should take this opportunity to blame us for delays that would be prejudicial to labour. We will co-operate as much as possible, and if we could be sure that when the proposal is referred to the committee we would be able to have some amendments accepted, we would most willingly give it our support. But, I believe that our amendments will be dealt with in the same way as amendments submitted by opposition members to other committees. They will simply be ignored.

Mr. Pepin: Not if they are of some value.

• (12:40 p.m.)

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, this measure comes too late. The government is doing the little it can do now, but it is much too late. He should have done so a long time ago, since in July 1968, the authorities of the textile industry, namely the C.N.T.U., Montreal, the United Textile Workers of America, Montreal, the Textile Workers' Union of America, Don Mills, Ontario, and the Canadian Textile Institute, Montreal, submitted a brief to the government pointing out the causes of the trouble in the textile industry. Indeed, one can read on page 16 of the brief, and I quote:

The present situation leaves us a choice between two policies, one of which might lead to a constant drop in production, employment, investments and in the standard of living of the communities where industries must compete with low cost products.

On the contrary, the other can assure the viability and expansion of a Canadian textile industry capable of contributing to the economic growth of the country. Obviously, there is nothing comforting in the first of these possibilities, but it should be kept in mind that it could become a reality.

Textile and Clothing Board Act

Here are some of the recommendations that were made:

The policy should:

(a) eliminate any further dislocation of the market as a result of widespread below-average prices, and of the rapid and massive influx of commodities in new sectors of the Canadian market;

(b) prevent any unjustifiable concentration of disruptive imports;

(c) avoid the continuing erosion that results from the fact that, one after the other, new perturbing export sources disrupt other sectors of the existing market;

(d) determine a trend whereby Canada could absorb a fair and reasonable share of the exports of low cost producers,

(e) and, above all, allow the textile and clothing industries more sustained possibilities for more numerous and better paid jobs.

Those, Mr. Speaker, were the recommendations made at that time to the government; they were completely ignored. Other representations were made.

Mr. Speaker, the textile industry has never asked for special treatment; it is not asking for subsidies; it seeks merely to continue offering employment to Canadians and making its contribution to the development of the Canadian economy. Although that important sector of our economy has expressed this wish repeatedly, the government has always turned a deaf ear. Indeed, it has always ignored its requests.

In the shirt industry we have proof that the inquiry by a board is not necessary at this time. We have proof that everything is known. The appropriate measures are known also. All the government needs to do now is to apply them.

Textile workers who have lost their jobs, manufacturers of textile goods such as shirts or other clothing who have been forced to close down failed to understand the indifference shown to them by the government.

The government is to be severely condemned in that respect.

Mr. Comeau: And how!

Mr. Ricard: On the occasion of a seminar held on June 14, 1969, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce had this to say:

In December (1969), I shall have to make a statement in accordance with what I have just promised. I hope it will be favourable and, in any case, if it is not I shall confess publicly at that time that we failed.

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I made it in May, with a delay of five months. Is that a crime?

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, for the Minister, a period of five months is not much, but for the head of a family—

Mr. Pepin: Oh! no—

Mr. Ricard: —who has been unemployed for five months, it is too long—

Mr. Pepin: This is oversimplifying, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the hon. member was not a minister for very long.