

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member says that we are "looking into" something, I would point out that he makes many unsupported allegations in this House. If we were to take them all at face value without any investigation, it would be ridiculous.

Mr. Broadbent: Name one.

Mr. Abbott: I could not begin to name them all. His misuse of the improvement in profits figures is another way that he misrepresents the facts. He does not give any background on what the profit picture was at Dominion Textiles a year earlier; whether there was an adequate return on investment or whether they had serious unemployment problems in places like Magog and Sherbrooke. He does not refer to any of that, but they are problems of very real interest to people working in those plants.

The question of whether foreign textiles are being purchased by Canadian manufacturers at a higher price than should be the case, and whether this is imposing on consumers higher prices than they should have to pay cannot be dealt with in the usual superficial manner of the hon. member. We have to examine the facts and ascertain whether a change of legislation or policy will be required. It is not simply a matter of profiteering by other countries; it is a matter of investigating to see whether the circumstances justify a change.

Mr. Broadbent: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. We are simply interested in dealing with unfair increases in prices. For example, other companies in the business sector have brought to the minister's attention the fact that textile companies in Canada have increased their prices to correspond with increases in the prices of Japanese imports because of the declining value of the Canadian dollar. That makes sense for imported textiles, but it makes no sense for Canadian-produced textiles.

According to Canadian manufacturers of clothing, the textile companies are making rip-off profits. Will the minister take some action so that the Canadian consumer may receive some benefit?

Mr. Abbott: Again, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member offers any substantiation for his point that there have been rip-off profits by Canadian manufacturers of clothing.

Mr. Broadbent: Textiles, not clothing.

Mr. Abbott: He spoke of a 34 per cent increase for Dominion Textile, without any reference to their profits a year earlier and whether they were adequate. I simply state that this is a complex question. In 1978, our departmental officials initiated an investigation. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong were notified of the proper, fair market value. As to the Japanese portion of the review, our officials have carried out further investigations but a decision has not yet been made.

The hon. member should realize that these are not easy problems to deal with. The whole pricing apparatus in respect of goods from these countries is extremely complex. For us to

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act arbitrarily, just because a brief has been brought in, without having the facts would be as irresponsible as some of the statements the hon. member repeatedly makes in this House about increased profits.

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● (1130)

[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY

REQUEST THAT SINGLE PERSONS BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR OLD AGE PENSION AT 60—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. When it held its 8th annual convention, the Fédération de l'Âge d'Or du Québec drafted a resolution calling on the minister and the Canadian government to provide old age security pension payments to all single senior citizens between the ages of 60 and 65. Could the minister indicate to us what her position is concerning this resolution and these senior citizens who I feel should be paid this pension?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I do not see why the hon. member is asking such a question at this time, in this pre-election period, unless he wants me to say that funds are available, when in fact none are. He is aware that I took part in this convention which was held in late September, that several of the resolutions made by FADOQ have been accepted, that the federation supported Bill C-5, which increased considerably income supplement payments for 60 per cent of older Quebeckers, which represents \$82 million more for senior citizens in Quebec. But lowering the age of entitlement for needy Canadians from 65 to 60 is unthinkable, at this time anyway.

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the minister. I would like to know why they are trying to ignore the issue since that seems to be the general consensus not only among people between 60 and 65 but among all Canadians as well. And I would like to know whether rejection of that demand is due to a lack of money or the fact that the minister did not believe the goods and services industry in Canada can meet the needs of those people?

Miss Bégin: I do not know exactly what the hon. member means by the goods and services industry. If he is referring to private pensions, it is clear those pensions of Canadians are unfortunately very disappointing in most cases. Nearly all of them have no form of indexing to reflect the value of the dollar, and they are not even universal. Of course, there are still many that discriminate against women. They are not portable when the employee leaves his job. From that point of view, there are many things the private sector could be doing to update those pensions. On the government side, as the