

that 80 per cent of Canadians are willing to pay the prices for shoes necessary to enable the Canadian industry to survive. It was a multi-question poll. For example, a total of 66 per cent consider that import competition is a very serious threat to the Canadian footwear industry. Sixty-six per cent say that the Government should protect Canadian jobs with quotas. The numbers vary throughout between 66 per cent and 80 per cent. That is a poll which represents not Ontario only, not Quebec only, but all of Canada.

A phoney crisis has been created by the shoe importers with their extortionate mark-ups of 300 per cent or more. It is the same in the garment industry. I have gone to a store to buy a sweater and on the same rack there are sweaters from Taiwan, Canada, Germany, United States and other European countries. They are identical and they all sell for the identical price. They are now trying to blame that on the manufacturers. The same sort of situation exists in the footwear industry. In effect what they are saying is: Cut wages. I visited Chile this summer where the Government did the very same thing. Our ambassador told us that the Chilean Government was right to cut the wages of the Chilean people so they could compete, and that Canada must do the same thing. Their competition has been so successful that Chilean workers must now produce three tonnes of copper in order to earn as much money as they did for one tonne of copper five years ago. We do not prosper by cutting our wages so as to force other countries to do the same thing. Therefore, I ask the Government to seriously reconsider the disastrous road it is going down, look at what is happening in Chile, Italy, Taiwan, South Korea and Brazil, and stay away from wage cutting which is what this quota cut really means.

● (1610)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak to the Opposition motion because it deals with a matter that is very important to the region I represent and to my particular riding.

In the Eastern Townships there are many industries in the so-called traditional sectors—textiles, clothing and footwear—and these have existed for a number of years.

Since these industries were first established, we have experienced a number of disruptions in our economy, culminating in the 1981-82 recession which had an absolutely devastating impact on this region.

At the time, the parties concerned ordered a study by the Gaucher-Pringle company, which reached the conclusion, after a survey of the region's economy, that although the industrial base was more or less diversified, the number of jobs in the traditional sectors—textiles, clothing and footwear—tended to outnumber those in other industries, in other words, although there was a range of various types of industries, jobs tended to be concentrated in the traditional sectors. Needless to say, the

*Supply*

shoe quota issue and the whole matter of import quotas for textiles and clothing has always been a matter of concern in the Eastern Townships, and especially in Sherbrooke and the surrounding area.

That is why I am making an exception today, because, as Hon. Members are aware, as a rule I do not rise in the House, out of deference to the Chair, to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all the Members of this House, and I am making this exception because the question before the House today is so important that I feel I must rise to speak on behalf of those who elected me as their representative here in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, I shall, if I may, give a short history of the quota system, as many others have done before, but I shall be very brief. We in the Eastern Townships, like other regions in Canada, have had shoe quotas since 1977, except for a period of eight months when they were suspended by the previous Liberal Government, and these quotas will be in effect until November 30 of this year. I would like to emphasize that point because I think it is important. Earlier this morning my colleague from Richmond-Wolfe (Mr. Tardif) referred to that situation and said he was proud of the fact that he and some of his colleagues had openly defied their own Government. Well, there is one thing he forgot to say this morning, as someone has already pointed out, and I would like to refresh his memory once again. The fact is that the then Liberal Government had lifted the quotas despite a favourable decision of the Canadian Import Tribunal, unlike the situation at this time. It was the other way around: the tribunal had ruled in favour of maintaining quotas, but the then Liberal Government went right ahead and abolished them. In that context, I would suggest that the Hon. Member for Richmond-Wolfe and those of his colleagues who had the courage to face the facts did the only thing they could do as representatives of their regions. Considering how unfair the situation was, I think they probably took the best course under the circumstances. In any case the Government changed its mind after eight months and finally adopted a quota policy.

Since then, Mr. Speaker, the man who was Leader of the Opposition at the time came to Sherbrooke in May and had to say clearly where he stood with respect to footwear and textile quotas. His position was that his Government would not tamper with quotas.

Eventually, in June 1984, the previous Liberal Government once again asked the Canadian Import Tribunal for a study and, in June 1985, the CIT made its recommendations and then the Government took action.

I believe that, in this context, it is essential to re-evaluate or re-examine the motion introduced by the Hon. Member for Richmond-Wolfe. To be even more specific, Mr. Speaker, we must not forget that most of the workers in this industry—I have the feeling that I am repeating myself, but I think that this should be repeated if we really want to understand the problem—are older than the average and the majority of them