

Canadian Economy

correct this situation, I believe it might bring about some disruption in our society, as in several European societies and in particular in developing countries.

Mr. Speaker, paragraph (a) of the motion put forward by the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard) deals with the areas of footwear and textiles which have not been sufficiently protected in recent years. One must say that the federal government has intervened at least 22 times since 1970 in an attempt to correct or solve some problems which have arisen in the textile area. Of course, I for one feel there were too many interventions and if more specific and long range measures had been taken in some cases it seems to me they would not have had to intervene so many times. But I think one must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and recognize that some government interventions were beneficial to textiles as well as to those areas which are often designated as soft sectors.

In the past year, for instance, there were proposals made by the Minister of Finance who was then Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. They had some success. Even today I was talking to some textile labour leaders and they told me all their problems were not solved but that the arrangements and measures taken last year by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce had brought about some positive results. And the new minister announced less than three weeks ago that the measures which had been taken in the fall would be applied for some time so that the textile industry will be more protected.

However, Mr. Speaker, I had many occasions to rise in the House on this textile issue. At least five years ago, I had the privilege to deliver in the House my first speech which incidentally dealt with the textile industry and I feel some of the proposals I had advocated at that time are still worth considering.

I proposed, then, that the Canadian Textile and Clothing Commission become a permanent commission. All textile workers agree that the Canadian Textile and Clothing Commission, when asked to table reports concerning certain problems brought to its attention, has tabled very good reports indeed. Immediate action has been taken.

However, we must also admit that the Commission is not a permanent one and is too often asked to inquire into this or that particular problem. The Commission complies, prepares a report and hands it in to the government. This means that when we think there is a problem the Commission simply agrees. Therefore, it takes action much too late; it is a little bit like a coroner who only comes in to state someone is dead.

I submit very humbly that if the Canadian Textile and Clothing Commission were a permanent commission, it could very easily monitor the general orientation of the market and make proposals to the government which would make it possible to solve some of the problems in the textile industry without frequent government interventions.

At that time, I suggested that the Textile and Clothing Board should be permanent. In my humble opinion, it is a suggestion which should be seriously considered. The second

suggestion derives from the first one, it is that no textile import licence should be granted unless the Textile and Clothing Board can discuss that import licence, that is whether the licence is directly competing with some fabrics made in this country and that in granting the licence, the Canadian textile industry could be hurt badly. So I think that the Canadian Textile and Clothing Board would give great assistance to all Canadian textile industries if it could advise the federal government that the import licence requested by such or such company would likely hurt Canadian industry. That was the second suggestion I made.

The third suggestion—brought forward on many occasions by labour leaders, particularly by the CSD last year—is that we should guarantee a place on the Canadian market to Canadian producers. At the present time, there are so many statistics issued by the Canadian Textile and Clothing Board as well as by unions and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce that we wonder whether it is 40, 50 or 60 per cent of the Canadian market which belongs to Canadian manufacturers. In my humble opinion, we should be a little clearer with statistics, whether Canadian manufacturers could take 75 per cent, let us say 75 per cent or maybe 85 per cent, because I do not know any developed country which does not produce at least 85 per cent of all its textiles for domestic consumption. So it seems to me that 75 per cent of the Canadian market would allow Canadian manufacturers to stabilize the textile industry.

Mr. La Salle: I agree with you.

Mr. Pelletier: I see the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) agrees with me. Those are three recommendations concerning the textile industry which could be discussed by the government because in my opinion the textile sector is very difficult. In the area that I am pleased to represent in this House, that sector has faced many difficulties in the past, but it has been there for about a century and it will not disappear overnight. To take this troubled sector out of its present problems, it should be guaranteed at least 75 per cent of the market.

Mr. La Salle: Come on, give him support; he is the only one to defend himself!

Mr. Pelletier: For the information of the hon. member for Joliette, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I am not the only one; there are other members who wanted to speak, in particular the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Tessier), and deal with this problem today. There are at least ten members, a committee within our caucus, who made a serious study of this question and have often presented their recommendations.

Mr. La Salle: At long last!

Mr. Pelletier: As I said earlier some twenty measures have been adopted following the representations made by members within our caucus. I am not saying that the opposition has not contributed to that study—but I have to conclude these few remarks: I believe that the motion brought forward by the hon. member for Rimouski will give some of the members the