

Export and Import Permits Act

support these things, because the policies are a direct contradiction of each other. Get your act together before you come into this House introducing a Bill to do something about textiles.

I believe the Government's continued commitment to maintaining a viable level of production in these vital industries has been made patently clear on a number of occasions. In the 1986 policy statement for the textile and clothing industries, a government policy statement I might add, the Government announced its plans for a broad trade regime with the primary objective of moderating the pace of clothing import growth to allow orderly adjustment in the Canadian industry.

A number of measures were set out in the statement to achieve this objective. Canada pursued international negotiations in 1986 for an extension to 1991 of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement, the international framework under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which governs trade in the textile and clothing sectors. That is one thing the NDP always forgets. It always thinks Canada can go off and do its own little thing that we are a little island on to ourselves, and that we should never mind the global economy and what is going on around us. In addition, in 1986 and 1987, Canada renegotiated bilateral textile restraint arrangements with some 25 low-cost supplying countries. Those were tough negotiations, but we accomplished it.

To complement Canada's participation in this internationally accepted regime for textile and clothing trade, the Government has taken an innovative approach in introducing other programs to boost the prospects of domestic producers. These programs, while offering major benefits to Canadian clothing industries, will carry with them none of the potential for an international backlash, especially from low-cost countries, as would the Hon. Member's proposed import quotas at roll-back levels. It would cause a major furore throughout the trading world, and it would also conflict with the NDP's policy statement.

One of the programs I am referring to has most recently been the subject of a major announcement by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), the duty remission package for textile and clothing imports. The solutions offered by duty remission to the problems experienced in the clothing industry, and we do not minimize them, not for one minute, are particularly compelling. They have been under active consideration by this Government from the beginning.

We should remember the July 1984 campaign announcement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in Sherbrooke, Québec. He outlined the Government's agenda for the textile and apparel industry which would provide both stability through fair trade measures and adjustment in those sectors by promoting and reinforcing their strengths. A key area targeted in the announcement was rationalization of Canadian production through the use of duty remission schemes so that Canadian producers could work with instead of against low-

cost foreign producers. They would serve to combine Canadian expertise in fashion, marketing, and financial techniques with foreign input to offer a full range of textile and clothing products to both the domestic market and markets around the world.

The desirability of pursuing duty remission programs to increase competitiveness of Canadian manufacturers was reiterated in the Government's 1986 textile and clothing policy. Based on proposals put forward by the industry, a pilot project for duty remission on shirts was introduced at that time to enable domestic shirt producers to import, duty-free, those product lines which would complement their own output. Thus, they were able to focus more on rationalizing their operations to become more competitive. On March 22 of this year the Government announced an enhanced three part program of tariff relief measures to meet the express needs of the textile and clothing industry.

Let me conclude by saying this. The garment industry in Canada is very good. Our designers are world class. I am wearing a suit today, a Warren K. Cook fashion made in Toronto. I give them a plug. They are a Canadian company and do a great job. They can sell around the world. They make quality garments. Our designers are winning international awards. It is interesting to note that the Americans, in their criticism of the free trade agreement, said that their textile and garment industry will lose out to the Canadian industry. That is what they are saying in the U.S.

We in Canada are good. We are very good. Our garment makers are terrific. They are fabulous. They are superb. Our designers are great. We are going to do extremely well with all the programs we have in place for the garment and textile industry. We are going to be able to compete in the areas where we are good. That is what it is all about.

● (1430)

Unfortunately, I must tell my colleague, the Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap), that the Government must oppose his Private Member's Bill introduced today. However, we are greatly concerned about the future of clothing producers in Canada and have made what we believe is a very progressive move to develop a more streamlined and competitive approach, which will meet and even exceed the challenge of low-cost imports in a healthy and growing market.

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to make a short intervention on Private Member's Bill C-243, introduced by the Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap). At the outset, I have trouble with his proposal. As I understand it, he seeks to tie imports of apparel or clothing to 1983 levels. This would apply to importers of clothing and, as I understand his proposal, imports would be frozen at 1983 levels. There would be no way for importers to increase the imports of clothing.

On the other hand, domestic manufacturers would be entitled to additional imports and these additional imports