

The Minister noted that, during 1983 and 1984, the growth in imports of low-cost clothing was 26% and 15% respectively. "This has confounded the adjustment process," he said. "The industry must be provided a more stable climate in which to plan and invest for the future."

While ensuring a more effective control over imports, the new Government policy will also take account of the special economic problems of the less developed countries. "Many of the world's poorest nations look toward the clothing industry as a major stepping-stone to development," Miss Carney said. "It would be morally wrong to deny them continued access to our market". While imports from such countries have increased rapidly in recent years, more than half of Canada's clothing imports still come from only three sources - Hong Kong, Korea and Taiwan.

Included in the Government's new policy is a duty remission program designed to increase the competitiveness of domestic shirt manufacturers. Miss Carney noted that this is an innovative pilot project: "It recognizes that quotas can not be the only answer and that we must strike out in new directions if longer term solutions are to be found".

The Government also intends to upgrade inspection procedures on the fibre content of imports, to initiate a full review of country-of-origin labelling regulations, and to seek controls on imports of garments made from vegetable fibres, such as ramie, which are not covered by Canada's current bilateral agreements.

Mr. Côté said the Government's new policy reflects the principles outlined by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in Sherbrooke, Quebec on July 26, 1984. "Our Sherbrooke statement made clear our commitment to these vital industries", he said. "I am confident that the measures we have announced today will ensure the maintenance of a viable level of textile and clothing production in Canada."

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