

tion was put forward by the president of the Canadian Textile Institute when he appeared before the committee studying this bill. I think that such a proposition is the root cause of so many of the problems which our industries are facing. I do not believe that a guaranteed percentage of the market makes for a healthy economy in a free enterprise society.

Mr. Pepin: Neither do I, and I did not suggest that.

Mr. Yewchuk: In a recent article appearing on January 20, 1971, in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, this attitude was rather nicely summarized. May I quote from that summary appearing in the *Winnipeg Free Press*:

It was once accepted that industry exists to serve the public. Has this now been reversed in the case of textiles? Do we, the captive consumers, exist to save the needs of industry and, to that end, must the market be rigged so that 60 per cent of our textile dollars flow to the domestic interests—

Mr. Pepin: That is not in the bill. Is the hon. member answering the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Ricard)?

Mr. Yewchuk: I listened with a good deal of interest to his speech, and that is why I said at the beginning that I was not objecting to this bill. I am merely pointing out what we ought to be thinking about from the consumer's point of view.

Mr. Pepin: But what the hon. member has just suggested is not in the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please.

Mr. Yewchuk: I hope, Mr. Speaker, that all hon. members will carefully weigh the comments I have made and the precedents which Bill C-215 will establish, if passed, which I have attempted to outline in the preceding comments.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) appeared before one of our standing committees a few days ago, I went out of my way to commend him with respect to one portion of this bill, Bill C-215. I refer, of course, to the provision in the bill for enhanced unemployment insurance benefits or for preretirement benefits in the case of textile workers who are put out of their jobs as a result of government policy. My going out of my way to commend the Minister of Labour brought a reaction on his part. He went out of his way to make it clear that this provision is unique and applicable in this kind of situation only because this very bill could produce a situation which government policy might throw people out of work. He did not want me to read anything more into it.

In my intervention at this point, which will last for only a couple of minutes, I wish to repeat my commendation. I think the government is doing the right thing in providing for enhanced unemployment insurance benefits or for preretirement benefits when textile workers are thrown out of their employment. I should like to impress upon the government that this is a principle that ought to

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be extended. It is all right for the government to say that this is a special case. It is all right for the government to admit that in this instance government policy may cause unemployment. The fact is that many of those who are out of work in other areas, especially those of middle or older years, are out of work because of government policy, because of social policy, or because of conditions generally. I submit that this situation should not be regarded as unique. Instead, the government should boast of it as a precedent and as a principle that it should be prepared to follow.

I am also interested in the remarks attributed to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in Niagara Falls over the weekend. He said that one of the solutions to our unemployment problem would be earlier retirement. If we are going to talk about earlier retirement, and if we are going to talk about people being forced out of work at ages such as 50 or 54, the ages mentioned in this context, it seems to me that we must move a great deal faster than we have been moving in the provision of adequate pensions at an earlier age. I welcome these few beginnings, especially the one that is before us in this piece of legislation. I noted with interest the plea made this afternoon by the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Cafik) that if any textile workers are denied benefits to which they think they are entitled, there should be an appeal to the board or even beyond that board. The main point of my intervention, however, is to say that it is a good idea for the government to recognize that when people are out of work at age 50 or 55, the government has a special responsibility. I agree with the statement of the Prime Minister in this area which he made at Niagara Falls over the weekend. I urge that the government move a lot faster than it has been moving in the matter of providing for earlier retirement. But the only way to do this is to provide adequate pensions so that people can enjoy an earlier retirement, and that is the plea I make at this time.

• (4:40 p.m.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. If the minister speaks at this time, he should have the unanimous consent of the House, and close the debate. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, while I receive assurance from every part that there will be unanimous or almost unanimous endorsement of Bill C-215, it would be ungracious for me of course, to hinder speedy passage of this bill on third reading.

However, I feel strongly tempted to reply, point after point, to some hon. members who imagined all kinds of specters, werewolves and ghosts in order to try and frighten people about the implementation of this bill, and especially to answer some editorial writers who wrote about this bill "non rational" things, to use the term of the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton). But I resist the temptation and wait for other circumstances.