The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Derwinski. Any questions?

Mr. DERWINSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Our next witness is the Honorable William H. Harsha, of Ohio. Please come forward, sir, and you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM H. HARSHA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Mr. HARSHA. On October 26, 1967, I introduced H.R. 13715, "The Iron and Steel Orderly Trade Act of 1967," and on November 21, 1967, cosponsored H.R. 14120, which was introduced by Congressmen Charles Vanik and Jackson Betts, of Ohio. Both bills have the same general thrust—the preservation of our American steel industry, which is in imminent danger from an ever-increasing flood of low-priced foreign steel imports. Indicative of the depth of concern felt by both industry and labor is the appearance before this committee of Mr. Tom Patton, chairman of the board of Republic Steel Corp., and Mr. I. W. Abel, president of the United Steelworkers—on the same side of the table.

Presently these and similar bills are being considered by the Ways and Means Committee; and certain recent events have led me to urge the committee to report this legislation promptly and favorably.

Last year foreign steel imports set a new record—11,500,000 tons with a value of $1.3 billion; that was bad enough, but in the first 5 months of this year, imports have reached a new peak and for that period are 56 percent higher than last year's record. Total steel imports for 1968 are expected to be in the neighborhood of 17 million tons.

Not only is this flood endangering the livelihoods of many thousands of steelworkers as well as the financial health of the industry itself, but its harmful impact on our balance of trade and balance of payments can no longer be ignored.

In May the Department of Commerce reports that our imports set a new record for the second month in a row and that we had in fact a negative balance of trade for that month. For the first 5 months of 1968, a paper-thin favorable balance of trade in the order of $972,000 is shown. A major factor in this disturbing trend is the outflow of dollars for foreign steel which through the first 5 months of 1968 has amounted to $735,563,000.

It should also be noted for the record that one of our principal trading partners—France—faced with somewhat the same problems insofar as their balance-of-payments problems are concerned as we are immediately imposed import quotas on a number of items including steel and likewise instituted a new series of export subsidies.

France's action is just most recent evidence that no other nation in the world will permit the strength and viability of its steel industry to be impaired. Can and will we stand idly by and watch this basic and vital industry of ours condemned to a not-so-lingering death?

Again, I urge the committee with all the force and sincerity at my command to report out promptly and favorably the Iron and Steel Orderly Trade Act of 1967.

The CHAIRMAN. Any questions? If not, then, thank you, Mr. Harsha, for sharing your views with us.