

It is easy to see that the welfare of the textile industry and its ability to grow and expand is a key factor in the ability of my State to grow and expand.

The story is similar throughout the textile-producing states of the Southeast.

I am certain that this committee is aware of the impact of textile imports into the United States over the last 10 years.

For a number of years, the Southern Governors' Conference has been concerned about the steady buildup of textile imports which is holding back the ability of our states to realize their full potential for growth. In fact, the Conference again last week approved a resolution calling for Congressional action to stem the flow of textile imports. I have already forwarded a copy of that resolution to the Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, your committee has heard the case for reasonable restraints on imports. I hope you agree with me that textile imports have reached serious proportions. This trend must be reversed if we are to have a growing, viable textile industry in this country.

The difference in economic factors between the United States and the rest of the textile producing world has been called to your attention. It amounts to a situation whereby the domestic industry is at an unfair advantage in competing against unrestrained imports of foreign textiles. Practically every factor that enters into the finished product in the United States costs more than the same item does in some foreign textile producing area. We pay higher wages. We pay more for equipment, supplies, utilities and transportation. We pay more for items that enter into the competitive consideration of putting into the marketplace our end-product as compared with an end-product that is prepared, by way of illustration, in Hong Kong.

The argument which has been presented to you—that by permitting uncontrolled imports to enter into the United States, we are thereby providing the consuming public with products costing less than the equivalent domestically produced article—carries little persuasion with it when the textile worker is offered in the retail store a shirt produced in the Orient for a dollar less than a domestically produced one if he has lost his job and doesn't have the resources to buy a shirt at any price.

As Governor of North Carolina, I am concerned first and primarily with the welfare, livelihood and future of our own citizens. All the theories and philosophies about the desirability of providing absolutely no protection to American industry from foreign imports are of no benefit if their practice results in the economic collapse and massive unemployment among our citizens.

I do not come here contending that imports should be barred. I do assert without reservation, however, that a system of orderly controlled imports must be established or the economy of this nation may well be wrecked. What I would like to emphasize, Mr. Chairman, is the impact of this rising level of imports on our states in terms of jobs and our ability to create new employment.

The textile industry is the lifeblood of many communities throughout the Southeast. In many cases, the textile mill or man-made fiber plant is the largest or a major employer in a community. During the past decade, textile employment has played a particularly important role in the transition of tens of thousands of people from farming to manufacturing. Communities have grown around textile facilities.

As Governor, I am constantly concerned with providing more jobs for our people. Here, again, a growing textile industry can provide part of the answer. The textile industry has always been concentrated in smaller towns, in the communities that are in or near areas that once were basically farm communities. Many textile employees still live on farms and commute to their jobs. A textile mill offers opportunities for advancement and training, so employees can move up the ladder to better and better jobs.

One of the reasons the United States has such a liberal trade policy is that we want to help some of the underdeveloped nations become first-class citizens in the community of nations. This certainly is a praiseworthy goal, and it would be a good thing if that were what was happening. But in the case of textiles, we find today that about one-third of our imports come from Japan, which has the fourth-largest gross national product in the world and is anything but an underdeveloped nation.