

It is high time we started paying more attention to the effect import trade policies are having on the underdeveloped areas within our own country.

The Appalachia Regional Development Area is a case in point. The textile industry complex, apparel, textile mills and man-made fiber production provide one out of every four jobs in the counties designated as Appalachia. During the past 25 years, textile and apparel employment in this region has increased by some 160,000 jobs.

As you gentlemen know, the Federal Government is spending millions of dollars in Appalachia, and our states are making an additional contribution, to build highways and stimulate industrial development. It just does not make sense to undercut all of this effort by exporting more and more textile jobs to Asia every year.

Textile product imports last year reached a level of some 2.6 billion square yards. It has been estimated that this amounts to the equivalent of some 200,000 textile jobs in this country. In spite of this, our trade negotiators agreed in Geneva last year to reduce textile tariffs further. As a result, imports during the first quarter of this year have set new records.

I cite these figures to illustrate the fact that the textile import problem is not going away. In fact, it is getting worse month-by-month. No one is suggesting that imports should be stopped or rolled back. But it is obvious that the continuing upward trend must be reversed.

It is for this reason that we are appealing to Congress for legislation which will bring about orderly trade in textiles; legislation which will provide for a reasonable amount of imports, but at the same time safeguard the hundreds of thousands of people in this country who depend upon the textile industry for a livelihood.

At the rate imports are entering the United States, we are approaching the point where all of the future growth of the textile industry will be taken over by products from foreign countries. It borders on the ridiculous to take one of the three basic ingredients for survival—food, clothing, and shelter—and turn it over to foreign interests.

Our country is faced with tremendous problems at home and abroad. These problems have taken on new dimensions which require new solutions.

As elected officials, all of us, in state offices and in Congress, must be attuned to the needs of our country and our people. The people are asking us for answers to these problems. We must provide the leadership and the programs which will help turn our country around and get it back on the track.

Our relations with overseas countries need to be reassessed. We must take the necessary steps to bolster our economy at home.

We cannot do this by undercutting one of our basic industries which provides employment for more than two million people.

Passage of legislation as outlined in the Mills Bill would be a major step toward restoring confidence and building a sound future for one of our basic and most important industries.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C., June 20, 1968.

HON. WILBUR MILLS,
*Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. James Utsey of Selma, Alabama, President of the Alabama Garment Manufacturers Association, has asked me to convey the enclosed resolution to you. I would respectfully ask that you enter this resolution in the testimony concerning textile import legislation which your Committee recently heard.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

BILL NICHOLS, M.C.