We rest our case on the report and recommendations of the Special Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, back in 1959. "Since the wages of textile workers in foreign countries range down to as much as one-tenth of the earnings of American textile workers, foreign mills have a pronounced competitive advantage over domestic mills and can dispose of their products in our markets at prices substantially below which American mills must receive. Therefore, we recommend that quotas be established which will permit foreign producers of textile products to sell in our markets within limits which will not further endanger existing textile capacity. We also recommend that quotas be established by specific categories of textile products."

Time is running out; the situation is far more serious today than it was in 1959, and we respectfully urge the Congress to act now in support of the workers in our domestic industries deprived of their livelihood by unfair, unjust import regulations.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE PERKEL, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, TEXTILE WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA, AFL–CIO

On behalf of the 200,000 workers represented by our organization who are engaged in the production of synthetic fibers and textile mill products in the United States, we welcome this opportunity to present our views on the need for import quotas on synthetic fibers and all textile products.

The Committee has heard testimony from industry representatives concerning the growing volume of textile and apparel imports. We do not intend to recapitulate the figures. It should be evident from the record that the present tariff and trade practices of the United States permit foreign textiles to enter this country at a rate which threatens the survival of the domestic industry. The annual rate of imports in the first quarter of 1968 (3.1 billion square yards) is more than double the volume of 1964 (1.5 billion). Continuation of this trend can only mean the destruction of the textile and apparel industry.

NEED FOR ACTION TO SAFEGUARD DOMESTIC JOBS

Our concern for the survival of this industry stems from the special character of the labor force. The personal characteristics of the workers and the geographic distribution of the plants strongly militate against an orderly transition to new jobs for displaced textile workers. The contraction and liquidation of hundreds of textile mills in the fifties resulted in untold hardship for many thousands of textile workers. The lot of these displaced workers was persistent and long-term unemployment, the loss of savings and homes, and the utter despair of facing a future without hope.

Our memory of these sufferings in the fifties is too strong to permit complacency in the face of the ominous threat of rising imports. It is inconceivable that the United States Government would fail to take action to safeguard the jobs of the millions of Americans whose livelihood is threatened by the massive influx of textile product imports.

THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE TEXTILE LABOR FORCE

The nature of the textile work force makes it imperative that effective government action be taken to prevent the continued erosion of the industry by imports. The history of this industry clearly demonstrates the serious difficulties encountered by textile workers in finding reemployment after being displaced. The fact is that these workers face severe distress in the event of a major contraction of the industry. The impact of such a development on the social and economic condition of the communities which are dependent on the industry would be catastrophic.

Geographic Distribution

The 2½ million employees engaged in the manufacture of manmade fiber, textiles and apparel are distributed among 33,000 establishments located in 45 states. The industry is so widely distributed that the injury caused by sharply rising imports cannot be gauged simply in local or regional terms. However, the concentration of employment in particular localities and regions make them especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of a decline in the industry.