Under the stress of domestic competition, aggravated by the rise in imports, wages of apparel workers in this country have fallen behind the general wage level in this country. In 1947, the difference between the wages of apparel workers and those for all manufacturing was only six cents an hour. Since then it has steadily widened. The differential rose in 1956 to 54 cents an hour. In 1967 it rose further to 80 cents an hour (see Annex O). The 1967 average wage in apparel was $2.03 as compared with $2.83 for all manufacturing. Workers in the apparel (knit and woven) industry are among the lowest paid in the nation.[13/]

Admittedly, a certain amount was added to the wages of apparel (knit and woven) workers since the end of the Second World War in the form of negotiated, voluntary and legally required fringe benefits. A periodic study made by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States showed that total fringe benefit payroll additions in the textile and apparel industries in 1965 amounted to 18.9 percent of payroll, or 38.7 cents per hour (see Annex P). The corresponding figure for all manufacturing was 23.6 percent or 67.6 cents per hour.

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13/ Examination of the most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings and Monthly Report on the Labor Force, April 1968, pp. 64ff., reveals that wages lower than in apparel are found only in a few industries, including retail trade and services. Average annual earnings for all persons engaged full time in the apparel and other finished products industry (including proprietors, executives, administrative, professional, technical and sales personnel) are the lowest in all manufacturing industry and only exceed earnings of persons in farming, hotels and other lodging places, medical and other health services, and private households (Survey of Current Business, July 1967, p. 35).