

FOREIGN TRADE AND TARIFF PROPOSALS

MONDAY, JUNE 24, 1968

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met at 10 a.m., pursuant to notice, in the committee room, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Wilbur D. Mills (chairman of the committee) presiding.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will please be in order.

Our first witness this morning is our colleague from Mississippi, Mr. Abernethy. You are recognized, sir.

STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS G. ABERNETHY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. ABERNETHY. Mr. Chairman, I wish to state my emphatic support for H.R. 9475, a bill similar to one I have introduced, H.R. 9330.

This legislation is designed to curb the ever-increasing inflow of cheap foreign meats into the United States to the detriment of the domestic cattle industry. It has the backing of the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, whose views have been submitted to you.

In supporting this bill, I am aware of the State Department's apparent fear that we might take action which would be disturbing to our allies, but I am more concerned with the economic state of health of the American livestock producers. You can be sure that most of these countries have some restrictive measures to protect their own growers.

My State of Mississippi, Mr. Chairman, is now the leading cow-calf State east of the Mississippi River and is ninth in the entire Nation. Mississippi calves move out of the State to two sets of buyers—to grain farmers wanting them for feed lots and to grassland cattlemen wanting the stock for additional grazing.

The 1964 import law has played havoc with this established two-way marketing system. Foreign meats produced with low-wage labor and on lands which represent only a bare fraction of the capital investment required of American livestock men constitute ruinous competition to the U.S. grass-fed beef which is boned and moved on to the consumer in various processed forms.

This unfair competition to the domestic beef grower, who faces continually mounting operating costs, naturally is reflected in a decreased demand for calves. This adversely affects the economy of Mississippi and other cow-calf States as well as the rangeland areas, and to a lesser extent the economy of the Nation as a whole.