APPENDIX V

DREW PEARSON and JACK ANDERSON

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

THE WASHINGTON POST Saturday, May 11, 1968 B11

Quota Bill to Raise Hamburger Price

Housewives don't know it, but a meat quota bill, which will boost the price of hamburger to 99 cents a pound, is now lurking in the wings of the Senate. It will be rushed out for quick passage when Sen. Roman Hruska, Republican champion of Nebraska cattlemen, figures the public is distracted by something else.

The meat quota bill is part of a high-tariff cabal of logrolling Senators who are out to put quotas on textiles, meat, steel, oil, shoes and various other consumer products. It was significant that when the textile quota bill came up in March, Western cattle Senators voted for it. It was part of the price-raising deal. Western cattle Senators have no political interest in textile mills in New England, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. However, they had a secret deal with Senators from these textile states to vote for a meat quota, if the Western Senators would vote for textiles.

Actually meat quotas would affect only the cheaper brands of meat used by poor citizens, such as hamburger, frankfurters, corned beef and chopped beef. Thus, while the Poor People's March is converging on Washington and while both the Johnson Administration and farsighted business leaders are trying to lift the level of the economy of big cities, cattle Senators are preparing to sneak through a bill boosting the price of the poor man's food.

Warns the National Restaurant Association: "The result of this bill would be to increase the cost of hamburgers to the consumer by 30 per cent to 50 per cent."

Boasts Sen. Hruska, author of the bill: "American beef is a premium product, delectable to the taste but not cheap to the pocketbook."

Hruska's cattlemen admit that practically all American beef is corn fed for the quality market which wants roasts, T-bone steaks and sirloin. The cheaper grades of beef are imported from Australia, New Zealand, and canned corned beef from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

One-Way Trade

Thus, while the United States is urging Australia and New Zealand to give more support for Vietnam and while we are trying to promote the Alliance for Progress with South America, Sen. Hruska wants to cut off meat imports from these friends and allies.

Australia now buys $891 million of U.S. goods—far more in machinery and automobiles than it sells the United States in meat. Argentina buys $230 million worth annually, and New Zealand, $89 million.

Secret strategy of the cattlemen Senators is to sneak the meat quota bill onto another piece of legislation as an amendment, in the same way the textile quota bill was slapped onto the excise tax bill for automobiles, telephones, etc. Sen. Hruska knows that a meat quota bill could not stand on its own merits and must be a rider on another vital piece of legislation.

Mastermind of the textile quota bill is Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.). Mastermind of the steel quota bill is Sen. Vance Hartke (D-Ind.). Mastermind of the oil quota bill is Sen. Russell Long (D-La.). Working together they control a sizable block of votes.

NOTE: The steel and textile industries, which are lobbying for import quotas, recently announced their profit figures for the first quarter of this year. Profits had gone up 40 per cent in steel over the same period in 1967 and 30 per cent in textiles, compared with the first quarter in 1967. Yet lobbyists for these industries informed Congress that they needed quotas because they were on the brink of ruin.