

FOREIGN TRADE AND TARIFF PROPOSALS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 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 esteemed colleague from Massachusetts, the Honorable William H. Bates. Mr. Bates, we appreciate your being with us and you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM H. BATES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. BATES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. I am grateful to you and the members of the committee for affording me this opportunity to be here today. As you and the members of the committee know, your distinguished colleague, Mr. Burke, and I have for many years led efforts through myriad avenues to help protect the American shoe industry from the ravages of imported footwear from the cheap labor countries of the world.

I am, therefore, grateful for this opportunity to come before you today and particularly to see Mr. Burke on the bench with you, as the labor and management leaders of the U.S. footwear and leather industries appear here to detail the frightening—and I emphasize, Mr. Chairman, the word “frightening”—import problem as they see it.

Perhaps I can best set the scene for this presentation by recalling that even before the Kennedy round agreements were reached at Geneva, the volume of footwear imports was rising at an alarming rate and threatening the livelihood of domestic shoe workers. But, since the Kennedy round, the shadows have already begun to broaden in this area.

Consider, gentlemen, that in 1955 leather footwear imports amounted to 7.8 million pairs valued at \$13.6 million. Yet, by 1967 the total imports of nonrubber footwear had soared to 129.1 million pairs worth \$217.6 million. That was an increase of 35 percent in pairs and a 41-percent increase in dollar value over 1966.

Then, in January of this year, 78 percent more foreign-made shoes came into the United States than in January of 1967. For the first 4 months of 1968, these imports totaled 69 million pairs valued at about \$112.7 million.