

Many communities in which there are shoe factories now operating are already areas of stubborn unemployment. In a statement which I presented to the Tariff Commission in 1964 in connection with the GATT hearings I listed over 100 communities which had shoe factories and which were classified by the Department of Labor as areas of substantial unemployment in the midst of general prosperity. The situation in many of these areas has no doubt improved since 1964, perhaps only temporarily. In any event, the shutting down of the shoe factories in these communities would seriously aggravate a hard-core unemployment problem.

There is another important aspect in which the shutting down of shoe factories would add to the hard-core unemployment problem. The shoe industry is an old industry, and a large part of its work force has grown old in its service. The United Shoe Workers of America made a survey this year of 6,000 shoe workers in the State of Massachusetts. Their average age was 52½ years; their average service 24½ years in the industry. The figure may be somewhat lower in other areas, but it would be generally true that the shoe workers are a relatively older work force, with long years of service. When their plants shut down, these people can hardly be expected to uproot themselves and move to other areas for employment, even if other employers were willing to hire them. Nor are workers displaced from their industry at such high ages favorable prospects for retraining for skilled employment in newer rising industries. This is not a reflection upon the skill, ambition, energy or character of our members who have given long years of skilled service to the shoe industry. It is a hard fact of manpower retraining which the history of our retraining efforts has amply documented.

In some of our larger cities the shoe industry has offered an avenue of employment to disadvantaged minority groups. If they lose their employment in the shoe industry, they may revert to the hard-core unemployed in the ghetto, aggravating a problem which the Government already finds almost insoluble.

I have tried to show above the serious consequences, in terms of personal tragedy, community welfare, and increased social tensions, which flow from the loss of present and future job opportunities in the shoe industry.

GROWTH OF FOOTWEAR IMPORTS AND EFFECT ON AMERICAN MARKETS

With the above background, let us now look at the facts with respect to the growth of footwear imports.

In 1960, the United States produced a total of 600,041,000 pairs of nonrubber footwear. In 1967, the comparable figure was 603,214,000 pairs, an increase of slightly more than 3 million pairs, or one-half of 1 percent.

In 1960 imports of nonrubber footwear totalled 26,617,000 pairs. In 1967, total imports of such footwear came to 129,134,000, for an increase of nearly 400 percent.

The effect of relatively stagnant domestic production and sharply rising imports has been a striking increase in the proportion of domestic consumption which is accounted for by imports. In 1960, imports of leather footwear equalled 4.4 percent of U.S. production. By 1967,