

To prevent such destruction we urgently request that affirmative consideration be given to maintaining the level of imports at the level which now obtains. We do not look upon the imposition of quotas as the ideal solution, and we are not unmindful of the serious administrative difficulties involved in the implementation of such a quota.

Ideally, such quotas should be worked out on a bilateral basis, one that would permit our country to accommodate to the requirements of another country whose economy is geared to exporting handbags or luggage or personal leather goods. Such accommodation would establish reasonable limits for such exports within the framework of the current percentage of the domestic market. If the market continues to expand, as seems warranted in terms of the upward thrust of the economy and the increase in population, particularly the increase of women workers in the American work force, a fixed percentage would redound to the advantage of the exporting country in the sense that the market would be considerably greater.

If no consensus can be reached on bilateral quota arrangements, we would urge Congress to consider the adoption of import surcharges. Such surcharges would be imposed when imports in the three major categories of this industry—handbags, luggage, and personal leather goods—exceed the percentage of the domestic market which had obtained in 1967. Or, if figures would have to be developed in an industry where data in the past has not been as comprehensive as one would like, we could have a moving 3-year period, such as has already been suggested for other American industries adversely affected by the impact of imports. If 1968 surcharges be based on imports as a percentage of the American market in 1967 alone, the 1969 surcharges can be based on 1967 and 1968. At the end of each period there could be a reevaluation of the effect of such surcharges. For administrative purposes, each base period would end on June 30, with the annually revised surcharge becoming effective the following January 1.

Concretely, we would suggest a surcharge of 3 percent ad valorem for each percentage point by which imports of any particular item in this industry exceeds the base percentage of the current share of the domestic market in 1967 or in 1967-68, as we have noted above. The high point of such a charge would be 50 percent ad valorem.

We look upon this surcharge proposal as an emergency measure, and not as a form of permanent protection. Frankly, we feel that the establishment of machinery for fair international labor standards would be fairer and more equitable. But pending the development of the latter, we are inclined either to the bilateral quota arrangement or the surcharge proposal as a means of assuring that the jobs and standards of our members, and the economic viability of the industries on which they depend, will be adequately protected. The alternative, frankly, would be economic suicide, and our union has no intention of submitting passively to this process of destruction.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your consideration, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee.

Mr. BURKE (presiding). Do you wish to make a statement?

Mr. WEISS. No, sir.

Mr. BURKE. Are there any questions?

There being no question, we wish to thank you for your testimony.

Mr. ZUKOWSKY. Thank you very much.