Low-Wage Imports Hurt Sale Of American Rugs

How would you like to live on 19 cents an hour?

That is the average wage of the worker in Japan.

Or how would you like to live on the average pay workers get in Belgium which is 48 cents an hour; or France which is 46 cents an hour or Britian which is 47 cents an hour?

It is nothing new that America has the highest standard of living in the world. But not many realize how low wages are in foreign countries.

When an American carpet and rug mill sells its products in the American market it has to compete with the imported rugs made at low wages. One of the reasons there isn't more work in the American mills is that foreign-made carpets made with low-wage labor, are cutting down on the sale of American carpets made at decent pay.

Tariff Is Safeguard

The only safeguard the men and women in the carpet mills in America have against low-wage imports of carpets is the tariff and there is a drive on now to cut the tariff.

If that happens it is bound to hurt.

If the tariff is cut it will mean fewer jobs for the American worker; and less hours of work per week. Just as sure as two and two equals four, Americans will lose jobs if more foreign-made, low-wage carpets are imported into the U.S.A.

Rate Is Increasing

Right now the foreign-made carpets are coming into the U.S.A. at a faster and faster rate because the tariffs have been cut steadily.

In 1930 the tariff was 60 per cent of value.

In 1939 the tariff was cut. It was cut again in 1948 and in 1951 it was cut still again.

Protects Worker's Jobs

The tariff to protect American carpet workers' jobs is now 25 per cent of value, which is a reduction of 58.3 per cent in twenty-three years. Right now carpet imports from foreign countries have jumped so much that the foreign products are coming in at a rate of 3,-300,000 square yards a year. There has been a 28 per cent increase in imports of foreign carpets per year.

And for every yard of carpet imported one hour is lost to the American worker in the mills.

What are the imports costing in American jobs? It simply means that three-weeks' work per year is lost to the American worker, thanks to the foreign low-wage carpets imported into the U.S.A.

Use Same Equipment

Foreign rug and carpet manufacturers use the same equipment as we do—12, 15 and 18 foot looms, many of which have been bought in the United States with money given them by the Mutual Security Program, and before that by the Economic Cooperation Administration.

The foreign carpet maker not only pays cheap wages, he copies the styles and colors of the American carpets to be sure they will be acceptable to the American public; and he does not spend advertising and promotion dollars, as American manufacturers do, to promote the sale of carpets in this country.

So the foreign carpets, made at low wages, take a free ride at our expense.

Wages Make Difference

It would be fair if the tariffs on imported carpets and rugs were enough to cover the difference in the wages paid to the foreign worker and the wages paid to the worker in our mills. Then we could compete on a fair basis.

Buys Material Abroad

The carpet industry buys all its wool and a lot of its jute abroad, to the extent of $100 million a year, and so helps the foreign countries. But those countries do not buy our carpets or rugs.

It would be a calamity if the tariffs on carpets were lowered today because it would cause lost time and unemployment in our plants. America has lowered its tariffs 70 per cent since 1934. It is about time the American worker got a break.

REMEMBER: EVERY YARD OF FOREIGN CARPETS MADE AT LOW WAGES AND IMPORTED INTO THE U.S. MEANS ONE HOUR LESS OF WORK IN AN AMERICAN CARPET MILL.

Karastan People Get Chest X-Rays

(Story on page one)

The X-ray trailer is pictured above at the Leaksville plants. Shown getting an X-ray is Fletcher Joyce of Karastan. The technician is Carl Rowell of the State Health Dept. Picture at right shows close-up as Elizabeth Parrish, also of Karastan, is placed in position at the X-ray machine by Mr. Rowell.