

**SENATOR
SAM ERVIN
SAYS**



The latest Government statistics show another rise in textile imports, principally from Japan, and reveal that this trend has worsened our trade deficit.

The textile industry has been the neglected child of our economy since 1957, the last year in which this country had a favorable balance of textile trade.

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Early in the Kennedy Administration, it became apparent that something had to be done to remedy this situation. The GATT control arrangements for cotton textiles were developed then as a partial solution to the unfair pressures our textile industry was under from foreign producers who benefit from lower wage costs, lesser taxes, and more favorable governmental policies. The 1961 arrangement dealt with the cotton imports and did not touch the wool and synthetic fiber import problems.

The new figures show that our 1968 deficit in textile trade amounted to about \$1.1 billion. Cotton, wool, and synthetic fiber imports resulted in \$800 million of this trade deficit. This deficit was \$300 million larger than that incurred during the preceding year.

The problem has immense consequences for our State. The Textile and apparel industries in North Carolina constitute about 40% of our industrial force. These industries have more than 1700 plants in our State. They employ more than 333,000 of our citizens with an annual payroll exceeding \$1.5 billion. It has been estimated that more than 1.5 million for North Carolinians are dependent on the textile and the garment industries for their livelihood.

The basic problem is that our textile producers are faced with greater costs than their overseas competitors who are flooding our domestic textile market. This condition affects the job security of thousands of North Carolinians and millions of Americans.

The problem has not been resolved because a battle has raged for years in this country between those who believe in reasonable protection for American textiles and those who favor free trade. Consequently, our Government has often

been indecisive in its efforts to protect the domestic textile industry, and foreign nations have taken advantage of this situation.

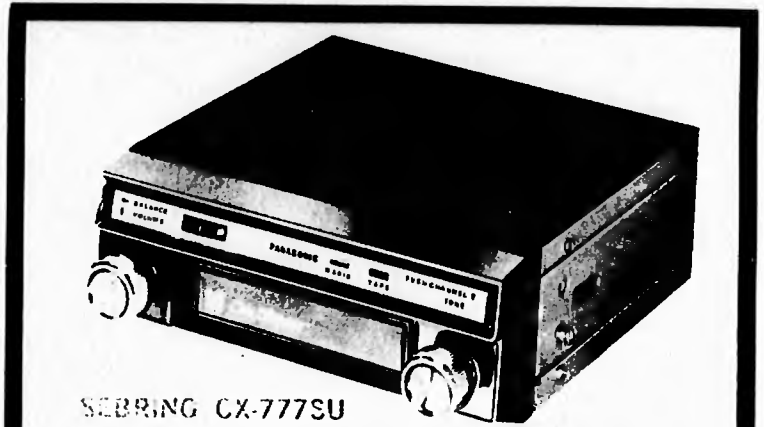
It should be evident to any fair-minded person that we do not have the conditions present in this country which will permit our textile industry to thrive under a "free trade" policy. This is so because "free trade" cannot exist unless we are willing to let prices rise and fall with the demands of the market. Not only are we unwilling to do this, but we have also established controls over our domestic industry through minimum wages, taxes, and other governmental policies which interfere with a free market. In addition, the textile industry is at the mercy of overseas competitors who benefit from their national trade

and investment policies. Thus the American textile industry is faced with serious problems unknown to its foreign competitor.

To remedy this problem, this nation must establish reasonable restraints on wool, synthetic fibers, and blended textile goods coming into this country. The Secretary of Commerce has recently sought to conclude such an agreement with Asian and European nations. Thus far, he has met with little success. Unless such an agreement is concluded soon, I think Congress should enact measures to remedy this situation, and I expect to support such legislation.

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