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Statement on letter to Tariff Commission

Strom Thurmond

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 7--Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) has urged the Tariff Commission to give "first consideration to the best interest and welfare of American citizens and manufacturers" in determining the peril point to be used for negotiating tariff rates on textile woolens and other items at the next GATT Conference.

The South Carolina Democrat expressed his concern over the welfare of the asbestos and woolen industries in a letter written to the Commission on Saturday. During the past session of Congress he led the fight against low tariff rates on cheap Japanese textile imports, which he said would result in throwing thousands of domestic textile employees out of work. He spearheaded successful moves to amend the new trade bill providing a greater degree of protection to the American textile industry and a resolution calling for an investigation of severe reductions in cotton textile rates negotiated at the recent GATT Conference in Geneva.

The Commission is currently holding hearings through November 10 to determine the peril point for negotiating the items listed for the next General Agreements on Trade and Tariff Conference scheduled for early next year.

Senator Thurmond told the Commission:

"I am writing you regarding the hearing now in progress by the Commission which is to determine the peril point to be used for negotiating tariff rates on products to be considered at the next GATT Conference. I have received letters from manufacturers of asbestos materials and from manufacturers of various woolen products expressing concern over the possibility of an reduction in tariff on such items."
I have also received a petition from the employees of a worsted yarn textile concern expressing opposition to 'any reduction in tariff on wool yarn.'

"I want to express my own concern at the situation which has developed regarding tariffs imposed by this country because it is evident that the employees and management of textile manufacturing concerns in my State are fearful of the result of further negotiations with other countries relating to tariffs.

"My appeal to you is to urge that the Commission give first consideration to the best interest and welfare of American citizens and American manufacturers in determining the peril point applicable to any item being considered for further negotiation. The great increase in orders for Japanese textile products following the tariff reduction effective this past September on such items is evidence to me that adequate protection must be maintained against excessive importation of foreign goods if many of our manufacturers are to continue to be able to provide employment to thousands of their employees."

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