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Congress of the United States
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Room 244, House Office Building
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STATEMENT MADE AT PRATT, KANSAS.

Congressman Bob Dole, (R-Kansas) assailed the Administration's beef import policies, in a statement to Republicans attending a dinner meeting in Pratt. Governor John Love of Colorado was the featured speaker at a Pratt County fund raising dinner Friday evening, October 18.

Dole's statement is as follows:

"More than $3.5 billion worth of farm commodities were imported by the United States in 1962, even though the United States Department of Agriculture indicates over $8 billion was invested in so-called "surplus" domestic farm products in 1962.

"While imports of coffee, tea and cocoa, not produced domestically, accounted for about $1.2 billion of the total, nearly all other importations were competitive with domestic products. It is beyond comprehension that the present Administration would have permitted importation of dairy products worth more than $36 million in a year when the government purchased nearly half a billion dollars worth of dairy products in futile effort to support milk prices.

"The list of imports further reveals $57 million worth of grains, fodders and feeds came into the United States during a year about $800 million was expanded by the U.S.D.A. to reduce feed grain production at home.

"The real shocker, however, is the fact that $481 million worth of meat products were imported by the United States last year. This, of course, was in competition with domestic production and helped to hammer down prices received by American farmers for cattle, hogs and poultry.

"Imports of boneless beef and veal rose from 88 million pounds in 1957 to 819 million pounds in 1962, an increase of nearly 1,000 percent. In 1962, the United States took 79 percent of Australia's beef and veal exports and, for the past three years, have been taking more than 90 percent of New Zealand's boneless beef exports. Ireland, Nicaragua and Guatemala have also been major exporters to the United States.

"The effects of these heavy meat importations are felt far beyond the livestock industry. Much of the imported meat products come in processed form, thus displacing a considerable number of American jobs and adding to our unemployment problem.

"When meat products are imported not only is American production of livestock curtailed, but also domestic production of grain and other livestock feeds. If the $481 million worth of meat imported in 1962 had been produced in the United States, the equivalent of about 200 million bushels of domestic feed grains would have been consumed in the process. If feed grain surpluses could be shrunk that much each year, the present oversupply of corn and grain sorghums would disappear within three or four years.

"The President has the authority to order hearings and impose import restrictions if he finds farm products from abroad are harming domestic producers. Clearly many of the farm commodities imported into the United States are injuring farmers here but nothing has been done.

"It might be noted how other countries react to American farm exports. A year ago the six Common Market countries of Western Europe imposed a prohibitive 12 3/4 cent per pound import levy on American poultry. We had built up a $50 million a year market for poultry in these countries but sales there have now shrunk to about $15 million a year.

"A recent study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that our country has fewer import restrictions on agricultural commodities than any other major Nation. The survey revealed that we protect only 26 percent of our farm products from foreign competition. For Canada and Australia, the figure is 41 percent. Denmark protects 87 percent of its farm products, West Germany 93 percent, France 94 percent and New Zealand and Portugal 100 percent.

"It would appear this Administration could very properly devote more energy to controlling harmful imports and reduce the emphasis on "controlling" the American farmer. I suggest that higher tariffs or quotas be imposed to limit the meat inflow if voluntary agreements can not be reached immediately.

"With foreign beef consistently underselling domestic by 5 cents a pound, the packer who uses domestic beef has no choice but to put pressure on the price he pays to the producer. Packers who bone beef for processing--usually small, independent companies--work on a profit of about 1/4 cent per pound. Obviously, they can't meet the 5-cent differential by cutting profit. The only means is to pay less to the farmer.

"The consequence is reduction in the farmer's and rancher's income and the value of his livestock, which is collateral for his loans. Continuation of the depressing effect of cheap foreign meat will force further liquidation of herds and bankrupt many producers, just as it has already bankrupted many small packers.

"The need is not for total exclusion of foreign meats. They are necessary to meet the demand for processed products. What we need is a combination of quotas and tariffs that will limit imports to the amount needed to satisfy domestic needs, while assuring a market for domestic products; and will discourage the favoring of foreign meats over domestic."