

UNITED STATES TARIFF COMMISSION

SILVER-PLATED AND STAINLESS-STEEL TABLE HOLLOWARE:
CERTAIN WORKERS OF THE FACTORY E PLANT,
INTERNATIONAL SILVER COMPANY, MERIDEN, CONNECTICUT

Report to the President on Investigation No. TEA-W-29
Under Section 301(c)(2) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962



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UNITED STATES TARIFF COMMISSION

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REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT

U.S. Tariff Commission
December 11, 1970

To the President:

In accordance with section 301(f)(1) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (76 Stat. 885), the U.S. Tariff Commission herein reports the results of an investigation made under section 301(c)(2) of the act in response to a petition filed by a group of workers.

On October 13, 1970, the United Steelworkers of America, Washington, D.C., filed a petition for a determination of eligibility to apply for adjustment assistance on behalf of the workers of Factory E, International Silver Company, Meriden, Connecticut. The Commission instituted the investigation (TEA-W-29) on November 2, 1970, to determine whether, as a result in major part of concessions granted under trade agreements, articles like or directly competitive with the silver-plated and stainless-steel table holloware produced in Factory E of the International Silver Company are being imported into the United States in such increased quantities as to cause, or threaten to cause, the unemployment or underemployment of a significant number or proportion of the workers of the said plant.

Public notice of this investigation was given in the Federal Register (35 F.R. 17158) on November 6, 1970. No public hearing was requested by the petitioners or other interested parties, and none was held.

The information herein was obtained from officials of Local Union 7770 of the United Steelworkers of America, from domestic producers and importers of silver-plated and stainless-steel table holloware, and from the Commission's files.

FINDING OF THE COMMISSION

On the basis of its investigation, the Commission finds (Presiding Commissioner Sutton dissenting) that articles like or directly competitive with the silver-plated and stainless-steel table holloware produced at Factory E of the International Silver Company are, as a result in major part of concessions granted under trade agreements, being imported into the United States in such increased quantities as to cause, or threaten to cause, unemployment or underemployment of a significant number or proportion of the workers at the said plant.

Considerations Supporting the Commission's Findings

This investigation was instituted upon receipt, on October 13, 1970, of a petition for adjustment assistance under section 301(c)(2) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, filed by the United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, on behalf of production and maintenance workers formerly employed by the International Silver Company at its Factory E in Meriden, Connecticut. Petitioner contends that the requirements of section 301(c)(2) have been met in this case, and that therefore the Commission must determine that the workers involved are eligible to apply for adjustment assistance. The Commission majority agrees.

In the past the Commission has ruled that workers are eligible to apply for adjustment assistance under the Trade Expansion Act when the following four requirements are met:

- (1) Imports of an article like or directly competitive with the article produced by the petitioning workers must be increasing;
- (2) The imports must be a result in major part of concessions granted under trade agreements;
- (3) Workers producing the like or directly competitive article must be unemployed or underemployed, or threatened with unemployment or underemployment; and
- (4) The increased imports (resulting in major part from trade-agreement concessions) must be the major factor in causing or threatening

to cause the unemployment or under-employment.

Each of these requirements is discussed below.

Increased imports

The workers on whose behalf this petition was filed were engaged in the production of stainless-steel and silver-plated table holloware. It is apparent that imports of like or directly competitive stainless-steel and silver-plated table holloware have increased. Imports of silver-plated articles more than doubled during 1965-69, and imports of stainless-steel articles more than tripled during the same years. The available evidence indicates that imports of table holloware have increased proportionately. Imports of both continued to increase in 1970.

In major part

Since 1930, the import duty on silver-plated table holloware has been reduced from 50 percent ad valorem to 11.5 percent -- a reduction of 77 percent -- and the duty on stainless-steel table holloware from 40 percent ad valorem to 11.5 percent, a reduction of 71 percent. A further reduction to 8.5 percent -- is scheduled for both. Computations made by the Commission indicate that if the 1930 rate were still being applied, the price of imported table holloware in 1970 would have been equal to or higher than that of domestically produced table holloware. The duty reductions have made it possible for foreign-made holloware to undersell the

domestically produced product.

Moreover, it is clear that increases in imports of holloware have followed close on the heels of each recent duty reduction. The Kennedy Round rate concessions to take effect in five stages from 1968 through 1972 amount to a 50 percent reduction. From 1968 through 1970, the duties have been cut by a third and imports of silver-plated table holloware this year will be higher by 56 percent than imports in 1967 (the last year prior to the beginning of the Kennedy Round reductions), and imports of stainless-steel table holloware will be higher in 1970 by 83 percent than they were in 1967. In the first year of the reduced Kennedy Round rates, 1968, imports of silver-plated holloware are estimated to have increased by 30%, and imports of stainless steel holloware estimated to have increased by almost 50%. This lends credence to the conclusion that it was trade agreement concessions that caused imports to increase.

Unemployment or Underemployment

There is no doubt that employment has declined at Factory E of the International Silver Company, both in terms of the number of persons employed and in terms of the man-hours worked per individual. During 1970 the employment of production and related workers has declined steadily; * * *.

Total man-hours worked also declined during these months. It is evident that a significant number of workers at Factory E have become unemployed within the meaning of the Trade Expansion Act.

Unemployment as a result of increased imports

The final requirement of the statute is that the concession-generated increased imports must be the major factor in causing the unemployment or underemployment of the workers involved. * * * U.S. production of stainless-steel and U.S. production of silver-plated holloware both declined in 1970, while imports of both increased, as they have in every year since 1965. Thus, it is clear that domestic production as a whole lost ground to imports during 1970.

With respect to International Silver Company's Factory E, the plant here under consideration, it seems clear that the workers have been particularly affected by the increased imports. In 1965, International Silver Company began importing stainless-steel holloware * * *. In 1969 International Silver Company also began to import silver-plated holloware * * *. Thus, it appears that International Silver Company is beginning to substitute imported silver-plated holloware for its own domestic production. Accordingly, it seems clear to the Commission majority that concession-generated increased imports have been the major factor in causing the unemployment of a significant number of workers at International Silver Company's Factory E.

Conclusion

Since all requirements of the statute have been met, the Commission majority concludes that the workers on whose behalf the petition was filed are eligible to apply for adjustment assistance.

Dissenting Views of Presiding Commissioner Sutton

In my view, the criteria established by section 301(c)(2) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 pertaining to petitions by groups of workers for determination of eligibility to apply for adjustment assistance have not all been met in the case at hand. A significant number of the petitioning workers are unemployed, and articles like or directly competitive with those produced by the workers are being imported in increased quantities. I cannot conclude, however, that the increased imports have been the major factor causing the unemployment of the workers. I have, therefore, had to make a negative determination.

Plant E of the International Silver Company, where the petitioning workers were employed, produced table holloware, largely silver plated. The employment of production and related workers at the factory increased from an annual average of about * * * production and related workers in 1965 to * * * workers in 1969. During 1970, however, the employment of production and related workers has declined steadily; * * *. It seems clear, then, that a significant number or portion of the petitioning workers are unemployed.

U.S. imports of silver-plated and stainless-steel table holloware--the complained of imported products--have increased in recent years. Data on imports of those articles are not separately shown in U.S. statistics, but entries of them are known to account for the bulk of the entries in the categories where they are classified. Imports in those categories increased substantially in 1965-69; entries of silver-plated

articles rose from less than \$5 million in 1965 to about \$9 million in 1969, while entries of stainless-steel articles increased from \$3 million in 1965 to nearly \$10 million in 1969. In 1970, however, the growth in imports of articles classified in those categories has been small; imports of silver-plated articles in the first 3 quarters of 1970 were only 4 percent larger than in the corresponding period of 1969, and imports of stainless-steel articles, about 3 percent.

Although, as just indicated, the imports of silver-plated and stainless-steel table holloware have increased in recent years, I am unable to conclude that those increased imports are the major factor causing unemployment or underemployment at Plant E of the International Silver Company. I find little in the trends of imports of the holloware concerned and employment at Plant E to indicate that increased imports have adversely affected employment. On the one hand, imports of silver-plated and stainless-steel holloware increased substantially in the 5 years 1965-69, but so did employment at Plant E. On the other hand, employment at Plant E declined in the first 3 quarters of 1970, but imports of silver-plated and stainless-steel holloware increased little during that period. The International Silver Company itself has been importing an increasing volume of silver-plated and stainless-steel holloware. * * *. Clearly, some factor other than imports has been the major cause of the declining production and employment at Plant E of the International Silver Company. In 1970, in fact, both U.S. imports and domestic production of the articles concerned (including that at Plant E) were affected by the slowdown in the U.S. economy.

Domestic production and sales of holloware appear to have been affected more than have imports of holloware; domestic sales, for example, appear to have declined in value by perhaps 10 percent, while imports probably increased about 3 percent. Consequently, in view of these circumstances, I have concluded that it was the softness in the economy in 1970, and not the effect of imports, that was the predominant factor adversely affecting employment at Plant E. * * *

In light of factors set forth above, I have determined that articles like or directly competitive with the silver-plated and stainless-steel flatware produced at the plant of the International Silver Company are not, as a result in major part of trade-agreement concessions, being imported in such increased quantities as to cause, or threaten to cause, unemployment or underemployment of the petitioning workers.

INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THE INVESTIGATION

Description of the articles under investigation

The term holloware generally refers to household, table, or kitchen articles of china, glass, or metal which are more or less hollow. Table holloware includes bowls, dishes, goblets, gravy sets, pitchers, platters, punch sets, salt and pepper sets, sugar and cream sets, tea and coffee services, trays, trivets, and wine coolers. This investigation covers only table holloware of base metal coated or plated with silver (TSUSA item 653.8000) and table holloware of stainless steel (item 653.9530).

Various metal alloys are used in making holloware. Nickel silver, brass, and copper are the metals most commonly used in making holloware that is to be silver-plated. Metal holloware blanks are usually formed by spinning, stamping, or casting or a combination of these processes. Handles, spouts, and similar parts are generally cast or stamped and fastened to the blank by soldering. The final finishing operations of both the stainless steel and silver-plated articles require careful deburring and buffing, operations that often must be done by hand. Some types of silver-plated ware require more than one plating process. The quality of the finished product depends largely on the chemical composition and thickness of the metal used and on the workmanship, especially in the die-cutting and finishing processes. The preparation of the blank for plating and the uniformity and thickness of the plating

are extremely important in determining the quality of silver-plated ware. Because of these factors there are wide variations in the quality of the articles produced both in the United States and abroad and in the prices of the finished product. Institutional silver-plated ware (the type used in hotels) is generally made from a base metal of nickel silver and is very heavy; silver-plated ware of the type sold through most retail outlets is usually made from a base metal of brass or copper, is much lighter in weight, and is plated through a different process.

U.S. tariff treatment

Holloware is not specifically named in the Tariff Schedules of the United States (TSUS) but is provided for, along with a variety of other articles, in items 653.60 through 654.20. Table holloware coated or plated with silver was originally classifiable under the provisions of paragraph 339 of the Tariff Act of 1930 at the rate of 50 percent ad valorem. Pursuant to successive concessions granted by the United States in a bilateral trade agreement and trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the applicable rate of duty has been reduced to the current rate of 11.5 percent ad valorem (item 653.80 of the TSUS) and is scheduled for further reduction--to 8.5 percent ad valorem--by January 1, 1972 (table 1).

Similarly, stainless-steel table holloware was initially classifiable under the provisions of paragraph 339 of the Tariff Act of 1930 at 40 percent ad valorem. Pursuant to a number of concessions granted by the United States in trade agreements under the GATT, the 40-percent

rate has been reduced to the present rate of 11.5 percent ad valorem (item 653.95 of the TSUS) and is scheduled for further reduction--to 8.5 percent ad valorem--by January 1, 1972.

U.S. producers

According to the 1967 Census of Manufactures, each of 23 concerns reported shipments of silver-plated holloware valued in excess of \$100,000; * * *. The shipments of these companies were not limited to table holloware but included other types of silver-plated ware such as toilet ware, ecclesiastical ware, novelties, trophies, and baby goods.

The bulk of the silver-plated table holloware manufactured in the United States is produced by about 12 concerns. Although a number of additional companies produce table holloware, their output is relatively small. There are essentially two markets for this type of holloware, (1) the institutional market consisting principally of hotels and restaurants and (2) the general retail market. Some producers serve one or the other of these markets, while others, including the International Silver Company, produce for both markets.

Stainless-steel holloware, including table ware, toilet ware, ecclesiastical ware, novelties, trophies, and baby goods, is produced by only a few U.S. concerns. In the 1967 Census of Manufactures only 6 companies reported shipments valued in excess of \$100,000; * * *. Probably none of these producers restricted their output to table holloware and some probably produced no table holloware.

U.S. consumption, production and sales

The value of U.S. consumption of all types of silver-plated holloware and stainless-steel holloware in 1969 is estimated to have been about \$80 million and \$18 million, respectively. Data covering only table holloware are not reported separately in official statistics; therefore, the following data for consumption, production, and sales are estimates based on information obtained from industry sources through questionnaires and interviews. It is estimated that consumption of silver-plated table holloware in 1969 amounted to about \$70 million of which about 10 percent was supplied by imports; consumption of stainless-steel table holloware is estimated to have been about \$10 million, over four-fifths of which was supplied by imports.

U.S. production of silver-plated table holloware is estimated to have increased from about 9 million pieces in 1965 to 11 million pieces in 1966. Production declined to about 10 million pieces in 1967, then increased to about 12 million pieces in 1968 and to 13 million pieces in 1969. During the first 9 months of 1970 production was about 12 percent below that of the comparable period in 1969.

Domestic producers supply a very small part of the stainless-steel table holloware consumed in the United States. U.S. production apparently remained almost constant during 1965-69. However, production appears to have declined in the January-September period of 1970 when compared to the same period in 1969.

Questionnaires reporting sales and inventories of domestically produced silver-plated table holloware were returned to the Tariff

Commission by 11 major U.S. producers. The data received are shown in the following tabulation:

<u>Year or period</u>	<u>Sales</u>		<u>Inventory at end of year or period 1/ (pieces)</u>
	<u>Quantity 1/ (pieces)</u>	<u>Value</u>	
1965-----	6,463,182	\$35,260,788	1,323,315
1966-----	8,794,906	49,144,404	1,852,919
1967-----	8,376,949	48,657,844	1,781,077
1968-----	9,254,763	53,864,756	1,821,471
1969-----	10,037,593	56,989,780	2,234,601
Jan.-Sept.:			
1969-----	7,102,200	40,055,007	3,145,208
1970-----	6,002,578	36,401,185	3,636,701

1/ Data are partially estimated because two producers reported value of sales only.

The 11 producers that returned questionnaires are believed to account for about nine-tenths of the estimated value of annual U.S. producers' sales. The International Silver Company, which produces a complete line of silver-plated table holloware, and is the largest U.S. producer of such ware, * * *

* * * * *

Only three of the producers returning questionnaires reported sales of domestically produced stainless-steel table holloware. These sales were negligible when compared with sales by domestic producers of the silver-plated articles.

* * * * *

Stainless steel table holloware has not always been competitive with silver-plated table holloware in the retail market; however, it is reportedly becoming more popular, at the expense of silver-plated holloware, with both consumers and with restaurant and hotel operators.

U.S. imports

U.S. imports of the holloware covered by this investigation are not reported separately in official statistics. Silver-plated table holloware is reported under TSUSA item 653.8000 with other household, table, and kitchen articles such as silver-plated jewel boxes, money banks and glassware. Similarly, stainless-steel table holloware is reported under item 653.9530 with other household, table, and kitchen articles such as stainless-steel sink strainers, sinks, and basins. The value of imports for these classes as a whole for the years 1965-1969 and for January-September 1969 and 1970 are shown in the following tabulation: ^{1/}

<u>Year or period</u>	<u>Silver-plated articles</u>	<u>Stainless-steel articles</u>
1965	\$4,470,546	\$3,123,091
1966	5,608,519	4,276,133
1967	6,032,366	5,280,425
1968	7,999,931	7,894,129
1969	9,138,890	9,629,056
Jan.-Sept.:		
1969	6,772,692	7,058,615
1970	7,049,897	7,250,587

As shown above the value of imports in each category increased in each year 1965-69. Stainless-steel articles registered the largest increase during this period--208 percent; silver-plated articles increased 104 percent. The rate of increase in the value of imports slowed during the first 9 months (January-September) of 1970, exceeding the comparable period in 1969 by about 3.5 percent.

^{1/} Italy, Japan, West Germany, and the United Kingdom have been the principal sources of imports of silver-plated articles (table 2); Japan has been the principal source of imports of stainless-steel articles (table 3).

To obtain some measure of the value of imports of silver-plated and stainless-steel table holloware questionnaires were sent to about 50 importers, discussions were held with Customs officials, and an invoice analysis of Bureau of Customs entries was made. Relatively few of the questionnaires were returned by importers and the descriptions on the entry forms were not always specific enough to determine whether the entry actually consisted of holloware. Nevertheless, based on the limited data obtained through these efforts it is estimated that about three-fourths of the silver-plated articles imported under item 653.8000 are table holloware and about nine-tenths of the stainless-steel articles imported under item 653.9530 are table holloware. The available evidence indicates that these percentages have not varied appreciably from year to year since 1965.

* * * * *

In the course of its investigation the Commission, because of the heterogeneous nature of the products involved, was not successful in its attempt to obtain meaningful data on prices of imported and domestically produced table holloware for comparison purposes. In order to obtain some measure of the difference between prices for the imported product and those for the domestic product, estimated freight and insurance charges and a calculated import duty were added to the average foreign value of all imports of table holloware (as reported to the Commission by importers); this was compared with the average f.o.b. plant value of all domestically produced table holloware (as reported by major producers). Since holloware is priced by the

piece, this analysis assumes that the product mix of imports is similar to the product mix of the domestically produced articles. The following tabulation shows the above described comparisons with duty calculated at the 1930 rate and at the 1970 rate using the average value of the domestic product and of imports during January-September 1970 (in dollars per piece):

	<u>Silver-Plated Table</u>		<u>Stainless-Steel Table</u>	
	<u>Holloware</u>		<u>Holloware</u>	
	<u>1970 rate</u>	<u>1930 rate</u>	<u>1970 rate</u>	<u>1930 rate</u>
	(11.5%)	(50%)	(11.5%)	(40%)
Value of imported product:				
Foreign value	3.92	3.92	2.07	2.07
U.S. duty	.45	1.96	.24	.83
Insurance and freight	.47	.47	.25	.25
Delivered value	4.84	6.35	2.56	3.15
Value of U.S. product	6.06	6.06	4.22	4.22
	*	*	*	
	*	*	*	

U.S. exports

U.S. exports of table holloware are not reported separately in official statistics. Of the producers that returned questionnaires to the Tariff Commission 6 reported export sales of silver-plated table holloware; none reported export sales of stainless-steel table holloware. * * *

Insilco Corporation

General.--Insilco (International Silver) Corporation, with general offices in Meriden, Connecticut, is one of the oldest and largest domestic manufacturers of table flatware and holloware. In 1969, the corporation reported net sales of \$247.2 million and net earnings of \$12.7 million. Before the corporation adopted its present name in 1969, it was known as the International Silver Company, the name now reserved for the largest subsidiary of the Insilco Corporation, manufacturing table flatware and holloware.

Insilco Corporation diversified its product line during the last decade; it now manufactures a large variety of consumer, industrial and electronic products. In 1969, the sales of consumer products accounted for 57 percent of total sales; industrial products, 31 percent; and electronic goods, 12 percent. Among the products manufactured by Insilco subsidiaries are: table flatware and holloware (stainless-steel, silver-plated, sterling, and pewter), disposable plastic flatware, printed matter, paints, plastic and metal containers for cosmetics, metal stampings for automobiles (i.e., bumpers, door hinges and parts of suspension systems), bottle caps, various electronic products, and nonferrous metal mill products. Insilco Corporation also has subsidiaries manufacturing stainless-steel flatware in Taiwan and both flatware and ceramic products in Canada.

International Silver Company

As stated above, the International Silver Company is the largest subsidiary of the Insilco Corporation. The company is located in the Meriden-Wallingford area in Connecticut and produces flatware and holloware of stainless steel, silverplate, sterling silver and pewter.

* * * * *

The workers' petition requesting adjustment assistance covered Factory E located at Meriden, Connecticut. A brief description of this factory follows.

Factory E.--Factory E is the International Silver Company's production facility for the manufacture of table holloware. This plant produces sterling-silver and pewter holloware in addition to the silver-plated and stainless-steel holloware which are the subject of this investigation. * * * .

* * * * *

Employment

* * * * *

While the average nation-wide unemployment rate in November 1970 amounted to 5.6 percent, the unemployment rate for the State of Connecticut as a whole during the same month was 5.8 percent, a level described by the U.S. Department of Labor as an area "of moderate" unemployment. However, the unemployment rate for the Meriden area was 8 percent, a rate described by the Department of Labor as one of "substantial" unemployment.

STATISTICAL TABLES

Table 1.--U.S. rates of duty applicable to imports of silver-plated and stainless-steel table holloware, 1930-1972

Effective date of change in rate	(Percent ad valorem)			Stainless-steel (TSUS 653.95)
	Silver-plated or coated (TSUS 653.80)		On other metals	
	On nickel silver or copper	On		
June 18, 1930-----	50	50	40	
January 1, 1939-----	35	50	40	
January 1, 1948-----	25	35	20	
May 30, 1950-----	25	25	25	
June 30, 1956-----	23.5	23.5	19	
June 30, 1957-----	22.5	22.5	18	
June 30, 1958-----	21	21	17	
July 1, 1962-----	19	19	17	
July 1, 1963-----	17	17	17	
January 1, 1968-----	15	15	15	
January 1, 1969-----	13.5	13.5	13.5	
January 1, 1970-----	11.5	11.5	11.5	
January 1, 1971-----	10	10	10	
January 1, 1972-----	8.5	8.5	8.5	

Table 2.--Articles not specially provided for of a type used for household, table or kitchen use; toilet and sanitary wares; of base metal coated or plated with silver (TSUSA 653.8000): U.S. imports for consumption, by principal sources, 1965-69, January-September 1969 and 1970

(Value in thousands of dollars)

Country	: 1965	: 1966	: 1967	: 1968	: 1969	: Jan.-Sept. : 1969	: Jan.-Sept. : 1970
Italy-----	658	734	1,068	1,692	2,175	1,614	1,691
Japan-----	855	1,129	1,201	1,928	2,151	1,673	1,850
West Germany--	1,141	1,362	1,563	1,969	1,965	1,455	1,465
United King- dom-----	1,265	1,722	1,439	1,527	1,613	1,145	1,111
Spain-----	92	179	223	390	572	413	385
Denmark-----	185	143	131	108	140	96	152
India-----	31	53	58	78	123	80	138
France-----	126	119	159	80	118	95	37
Sweden-----	66	98	114	126	106	82	92
All other-----	51	69	76	102	176	120	129
Total-----	4,470	5,608	6,032	8,000	9,139	6,773	7,050

Source: Compiled from official statistics of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Table 3.--Articles not specially provided for of a type used for household or table use; of stainless-steel not coated or plated with precious metal (TSUSA 653.9530): U.S. imports for consumption, by principal sources, 1965-69, January-September 1969 and 1970

(Value in thousands of dollars)							
Country	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	Jan.-Sept. 1969	Jan.-Sept. 1970
Japan-----	1,236	2,202	2,783	3,931	5,533	3,940	4,563
Denmark-----	510	518	738	1,169	1,279	940	796
Sweden-----	670	761	671	855	792	631	593
West Germany--	318	364	487	940	767	626	517
Italy-----	137	146	260	470	397	277	317
Switzerland---	69	95	113	161	240	206	37
Canada-----	69	51	28	128	228	174	178
Hong Kong-----	4	5	35	45	176	111	95
All other-----	110	134	165	195	217	154	154
Total-----	3,123	4,276	5,280	7,894	9,629	7,059	7,250

Source: Compiled from official statistics of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

* * * * *