20th CONGRESS,
1st SESSION.

MEMORIAL

OF SUNDRY

MERCHANT TAILORS, OF NEW YORK,

PRAYING THAT

AN ADDITIONAL DUTY BE IMPOSED ON

READY MADE CLOTHING,

WHEN IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 5, 1828.
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AUTHENTICATED
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MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled;

The memorial of the undersigned, Merchant Tailors, of the City of New York,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

That your memorialists are greatly alarmed by the provisions of the bill for the regulation of the Tariff, now pending before you, which, in its present form, appears to threaten the existence of their business, and to annihilate the hopes of subsistence of many thousand persons who are employed and supported by the trade.

Your memorialists, although silent, have not been insensible of the various laws which have, from time to time, been passed by Congress, materially affecting their business. They knew they were under the protection of a government of the people, instituted to promote the general welfare; and although, at the last revision of the Tariff, the duty on ready-made clothing was stationary, while that on the material was advanced, they submitted without complaint, confiding in the wisdom of the government. Nothing but impending ruin now urges them to this remonstrance, and they trust they will not ask in vain for a hearing.

They cannot believe, that the effect of the pending bill upon them, has been perceived by any. They are slow to believe that Congress, in violation of the principles of the bill, would willingly destroy a branch of domestic industry indispensable to civilization; which stands in the way of none; which gives employment to decrepitude, otherwise helpless, and support to indigent females, by one of the few trades in which they can be suitably employed; and drain the country of money to nourish and support that foreign skill and industry which they are struggling to rival; and all this at the expense of a most serious diminution of the revenue.

When the duty was raised by the act of 1824, to 30 per cent. ad valorem, on all goods above the value of 33⅓ cents per square yard, that on ready-made clothing was suffered to remain at 30 per cent. which abolished the protection which the manufacture at home had previously enjoyed; but no complaint was made, as the trade could still compete, on nearly equal terms, with the foreign artist.

If the present bill should unfortunately pass, without reference to the duty on ready-made clothing, foreign fabrics, instead of being imported in the piece, to be made into clothing, will be imported ready made; and it will not be surprising, if the enormous profits which the saving of duty alone would give, should turn half the capital now employed in the import of such fabrics, into ready-made clothing.

By the present bill, your petitioners understand that a duty per square yard is contemplated of 20 cents, on goods not exceeding the value of 50 cents per square yard; of 40 cents, not exceeding one dollar; of one dollar, not exceeding $2 50; and of $1 60, not exceeding $4; and of 45 per cent. ad valorem, on all goods exceeding the value of $4 per square yard. It will therefore follow, that cloth of the value of $1 01, will pay the same duty as that of the value of $2 50, being 1 dollar per square yard; whereas, in ready-made clothing, the same cloth will pay a duty of 30 cents; thus saving 70 cents, or 7-10ths of the duty on cloth unmade.

Cloth of the value of $2 51, will pay the same duty as if it were worth $4, being $1 60 per square yard; whereas, the same cloth, in the shape of ready-made clothing, will pay a duty of 75 cents; thus saving 85 cents per square yard, or more than one-half of the duty: on all cloths above the value of four dollars per square yard, the duty of 45 per cent. ad valorem, will leave a saving to the importer of ready-made clothing of 33⅓ per cent. on the amount of duties.

Profits as enormous as these savings from government would constitute, must operate as a bounty on foreign industry, which domestic artists could not compete with, even if they should do their work gratuitously, and soon open a trade in ready-made clothing to an extent never before thought of.

It therefore becomes your memorialists, most respectfully, to warn the government of the evils which an omission to make a correspondent alteration in the duty on ready-made clothing, would entail on it as well as themselves, and to submit the case to your wisdom.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, &c.