

State

Angered with cheap imports

U.S. Steel to file complaints

United Press International
HOUSTON — American steel producers, angered and worried that foreign producers are dumping tons of cheap steel into the United States, plan to challenge their foreign competitors with legal action.

David Roderick, chairman of United States Steel Corp., Tuesday said U.S. Steel will file as many as 14 anti-dumping complaints and countervailing-duty cases over the next six months to stop the flow of cheap foreign steel into the American market.

The heads of several steel producers also expressed concern to the American Iron and Steel Institute about foreign underselling. Republic Steel Corp. Chairman William J. DeLancey emphasized that the American producers

do not want a protected market. "The fact is, our industry benefits from foreign trade," DeLancey said. "We want free trade, but only if it is also fair trade, and that is all we seek in objecting to dumped and subsidized imports."

Industry statistics for 1981 show steel is being imported at record rates — up more than two million tons for the first eight months of 1981 over the same period in 1980 — and foreign steel is claiming a larger portion of the available supply. August imports alone totalled 2.2 million tons, the highest single-month figure on record, and accounted for 25 percent of domestic sales.

Although there is a system to track the price of foreign steel imported into the American market,

Roderick said it does not work and he plans to file complaints with the Treasury Department to stop foreign underselling.

"With the breakdown of the effectiveness of the Trigger-Price Mechanism in monitoring and regulating foreign imports, and with the mechanism proving useless in preventing dumping, I believe we have no other recourse but to seek relief provided us under the law," he said.

The mechanism provides a reference for detecting potential violations of U.S. trade law by establishing price grades for imported steel products based on manufacture, shipping and insurance costs.

"Its enforcement is not stringent enough," Roderick said. "The lag between setting the trigger price and measuring its effect is so great the problem has become academic."

Roderick said it's too early to

tell what effect the complaints will have. "We are not sending signals to commerce or Congress; we are using the legal means at our disposal to insure our survival."

Roderick did not specify who the target in the complaints was, but said U.S. Steel had compiled evidence for five or six cases already and was working on about eight others.

If the company can prove the anti-dumping complaints, the government can fine importers who bring foreign steel into the country at prices that are lower than the steel producers' home-market price, or lower than manufacturing costs, an industry spokesman said.

The countervailing duty cases, if proved, will provide a floating tariff on steel products from foreign producers that get government subsidies. The extra duty would approximate the amount of the subsidy, the spokesman said.

Texas politicians bagged in Russia for early arrival

United Press International
AUSTIN — Rep. Gibson D. Lewis, D-Fort Worth, and former Rep. Richard C. Slack may think twice before including the Soviet Union in their next six-week, around-the-world hunting safari.

When Lewis and Slack arrived at the Russian border after hunting in Mongolia about three weeks ago, officials confiscated their passports and visas because they were not scheduled to enter Russia for two more days. Russian officials, however, did not stop them from continuing on to Moscow.

"When we landed the first time inside Russia, the agent told us, 'Hey, this is too early,'" Lewis said. "They took our visas away, and our passports, too. So when we got to Moscow, as we walked off the plane, one of those guys said we were in the country illegally."

Without their documents, the two men were ordered to a ramshackle hotel with an armed guard at the door. There they spent the next five days without hot water nor heat despite temperatures of

35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit. "We finally got out of there by bluffing a little over the airline reservations, fudging a little about the time," Slack said.

Their troubles were not yet over, however.

Although the Soviets allowed them to fly on to Bombay, they were not allowed to take their clothes, weapons, or hunting trophies with them.

Lewis, front-runner for Texas House Speaker in 1983, began a barrage of telephone calls to Moscow authorities from Bombay, asking that the expensive baggage be sent to India.

"What finally worked was when (Lewis) Telexed at the bottom of the message, 'Believed stolen by Russians at Moscow airport,'" Slack said. "That must have done it, because the bags arrived in India the next night."

With their baggage returned, the pair continued on through India, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Hawaii and Alaska before returning to Texas last week.

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