

UNITED STATES TARIFF COMMISSION

WILTON, BRUSSELS, VELVET, AND TAPESTRY CARPETS AND RUGS

**Report to the President (No. TEA-IR-5-63)
Under Section 351(d)(1) of the
Trade Expansion Act of 1962**



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(TC28827)

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT

U.S. Tariff Commission,
September 13, 1963.

To the President:

Introduction

Following an escape-clause investigation by the Tariff Commission under section 7 of the Trade Agreements Extension Act of 1951, the President by proclamation dated March 19, 1962, ^{1/} increased the rate of duty on Wilton, Brussels, velvet, and tapestry carpets and rugs (hereinafter referred to as Wiltons and velvets), effective after the close of business on April 18, 1962. By proclamation dated March 27, 1962, ^{2/} the President deferred the effective date of the increased rate to after the close of business on June 17, 1962.

Section 351(d)(1) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (76 Stat. 900) provides that--

So long as any increase in, or imposition of, any duty or other import restriction pursuant to this section or pursuant to section 7 of the Trade Agreements Extension Act of 1951 remains in effect, the Tariff Commission shall keep under review developments with respect to the industry concerned, and shall make annual reports to the President concerning such developments.

This is the first report made on Wiltons and velvets under section 351(d)(1). The material in this report is confined principally to developments that have occurred since the Commission

^{1/} Proclamation No. 3454; 3 CFR, 1962 Supp., p. 33.

^{2/} Proclamation No. 3458; 3 CFR, 1962 Supp., p. 40.

reported to the President in August and December 1961 on its escape-clause investigation of Wiltons and velvets. For more detailed information relating to trade in these articles, see the aforementioned reports. ^{1/}

The Commission obtained the information used in this report from its files, from responses to questionnaires sent to domestic producers, and through fieldwork by members of the Commission's staff.

U.S. Tariff Treatment

During the period covered by this report imported Wilton and velvet carpets and rugs were dutiable under the provisions of paragraph 1117(a) of the Tariff Act of 1930. ^{2/} The rates of duty originally imposed under that act were 40 percent ad valorem on such floor coverings valued at not more than 40 cents per square foot, and 60 percent ad valorem on those valued at more than 40 cents per square foot. These rates of duty were subsequently reduced pursuant to concessions granted by the United States in bilateral trade agreements and under the General Agreement on Tariffs and

^{1/} U.S. Tariff Commission, Wilton, Brussels, Velvet, and Tapestry Carpets and Rugs: Report to the President on Escape-Clause Investigation No. 7-104 . . ., TC Publication 28, 1961 (processed), and Wilton, Brussels, Velvet, and Tapestry Carpets and Rugs: Report in Response to the President's Request for Information Supplemental to the Report on Escape-Clause Investigation No. 7-104 . . ., TC Publication 41, 1961 (processed).

^{2/} They are presently provided for in item 360.45 of the Tariff Schedules of the United States.

Trade (GATT). On June 6, 1951, pursuant to a concession under the GATT, Wiltons and velvets became dutiable at 25 percent ad valorem, regardless of type or value; following a series of concessions negotiated under the GATT the duty was reduced to 21 percent ad valorem, effective June 30, 1958. In accordance with Presidential Proclamation No. 3454 (as modified by Proclamation No. 3458), the rate became 40 percent ad valorem effective after the close of business June 17, 1962 (table 1, appendix).

Description and Uses

Wilton and velvet carpets and rugs constitute two of the major types of textile floor coverings marketed in the United States. Both are included in the category termed "machine-woven pile" carpets and rugs. In 1962 they accounted for about two-thirds of the domestic production of machine-woven pile floor coverings and for about 11 percent of the total production of machine-made pile floor coverings (table 2).

The Wilton carpet is woven on a loom that utilizes a Jacquard attachment. This mechanism may be used to achieve a variety of effects in the carpet, especially to give it a pattern, either in color or texture, or to give it depth. Wilton carpets generally contain submerged pile yarns--pile yarns which are not required on the surface to form the pattern and hence lie buried in the body of the carpet. This construction gives the carpet what has been termed "a cushion back."

The velvet carpet utilizes one of the simplest weaves. It is usually less expensive to weave than the Wilton; the loom required is less complicated and the method of weaving usually requires less pile yarn per square yard of finished product. In recent years most velvets have been produced in solid colors. The demand for textured effects, however, has been increasing. Such effects are achieved by several methods. Pile woven at different heights forms a sculptured or textured surface; tightly twisted cut pile provides a frieze surface; and uncut looped pile supplies a pebbly texture. Other effects are obtained by combining cut and uncut pile in the surface.

The principal competitor of Wiltons and velvets in the domestic floor-covering market is the machine-tufted pile carpet. Machine-tufted carpets differ in construction from machine-woven carpets principally in the manner in which the surface yarns (the pile) are anchored to the base of the fabric. In the tufted carpet, the tufts are inserted mechanically into a previously prepared woven backing. The tufting machine, which employs a multineedle operation to "sew" the pile yarns into the backing, operates at a speed many times that of an ordinary Wilton or velvet loom. Technology in the tufting process has been developing rapidly, and new types of tufted floor coverings are being introduced that offer many, if not most, of the texture, color, and decorative effects now popular in woven carpets. ^{1/}

^{1/} For a more complete discussion of the characteristics of tufted carpeting and the trade therein, see the Tariff Commission reports cited in footnote 1, p. 2.

In recent years machine-tufted carpets and rugs have made rapid inroads into the market that was formerly supplied almost exclusively by machine-woven products. In 1961, tufted carpets constituted about 75 percent of the machine-made pile broadloom floor coverings (more than 6 feet in width) produced in the United States. Currently, it is estimated, nearly 80 percent of the total consists of tufted floor coverings. Domestic shipments of machine-tufted carpets and rugs (larger than 4 feet by 6 feet) rose from 114 million square yards in 1960 to 134 million square yards in 1961, and to 175 million square yards in 1962. In 1957, 8 of 27 producers of Wiltons and velvets also produced machine-tufted carpets and rugs. At that time 43 percent of their aggregate production of soft-surface pile floor coverings consisted of Wiltons and velvets; 35 percent, of machine-tufted carpets and rugs; and 22 percent, of other machine-woven and machine-knitted floor coverings. In 1962, 15 of 26 producers of Wiltons and velvets also produced machine-tufted carpets and rugs, and the corresponding percentages were 28, 59, and 13.

U.S. Consumption

Although U.S. annual consumption of Wiltons and velvets has fluctuated rather widely in recent years, the trend has been downward (table 3). The apparent annual consumption during the past

3 years was as follows: 1960, 40 million square yards; 1961, 37 million square yards; and 1962, 35 million square yards. Most of the decline in 1960 and 1961 was the result of a decrease in domestic production, but the further decline in 1962 was attributable primarily to the substantial decrease in imports that took place after the rate of duty was increased in June of that year. Data for the first half of 1963 indicate that imports and apparent consumption for the entire year will probably be below those of 1962. Consumption of Wiltons and velvets in recent years has declined largely because of the rapidly expanding use of other types of floor coverings, especially the machine-tufted type. Between 1960 and 1962 the annual consumption of all machine-made pile floor coverings increased by about 35 percent.

U.S. Producers

Since the Commission published its 1961 report, the domestic producers of Wiltons and velvets have made further adjustments to the changing pattern of the market. A major example of this was the acquisition of Firth Carpet Co. by Mohasco Industries, Inc., in early 1962. This acquisition resulted in the closing of Firth's two plants in New York and the consolidation of the Wilton and velvet production in Firth's South Carolina plant. One firm, formerly a manufacturer of both Wiltons and velvets, discontinued the production of velvets in 1961. In the same year, another firm, A. & M. Karagheusian, Inc., closed its weaving plant in New Jersey and concentrated its

Wilton and velvet operations in its North Carolina plant. The Artloom Carpet Co., Inc., ceased producing Wiltons and velvets in early 1961; thereafter it maintained only tufting operations. In 1962, Artloom, as well as the Olson Rug Co., was purchased by the Stephen-Leedom Carpet Co., Inc., a domestic producer of Wiltons and velvets. In the same year Callaway Mills Co., an important producer of tufted carpets and other types of textiles, began the production of velvet carpets. Also in 1962, Mand Carpet Mills, another producer of tufted carpets, began the manufacture of Wiltons. In early 1963, the Philadelphia Carpet Co. announced that it would discontinue the production of Wiltons and velvets and that its lines of such carpets and rugs would in the future be produced on a contract basis by the Hardwick & Magee Co., Inc. The Philadelphia Carpet Co. continued to produce tufted carpeting at its Georgia plant.

In May 1963, 30 plants manufactured either Wiltons or velvets or both. Of these plants, 8 were located in Pennsylvania; 5 in Massachusetts; 3 each in New Jersey and South Carolina; 2 each in New Hampshire, New York, and North Carolina; and 1 each in California, Connecticut, Georgia, Maine, and Virginia. These 30 plants were operated by 25 individual firms. Most of the firms operate only 1 plant in which Wiltons or velvets, or both, are made. One firm, however, produces such carpets in 3 plants, and 3 others each produce them in 2 plants. Of the 25 firms, 13 manufacture both Wiltons and velvets; 7 make velvets only; and 5, Wiltons only. As indicated

earlier, some of these firms, particularly the major producers, also produce other types of soft-surface pile floor coverings including machine-tufted and machine-knitted carpets and rugs.

U.S. Production, Sales, and Inventories

The U.S. annual production of Wiltons and velvets declined from 36.9 million square yards in 1957 to 28.7 million square yards in 1961, or by almost 23 percent; it then increased to 29.5 million square yards in 1962 (table 3). In the period July 1, 1962-June 30, 1963, the first full year after the duty increase, production of Wiltons and velvets was slightly higher than in the previous 12-month period. Production of Wiltons declined more rapidly than production of velvets during the period 1957-62; the annual output of Wiltons was about 29 percent lower in 1962 than in 1957 while that of velvets was about 13 percent lower.

Indexes of production, sales, and inventories of the 19 firms that supplied data for the years 1957-62 (which in the aggregate accounted for approximately 97 percent of the estimated output of Wiltons and velvets in both 1961 and 1962) are shown in table 4. The trend of sales of Wiltons and velvets by the 19 firms closely approximated the trend of production of such floor coverings. In 1957 the production and value of sales were slightly higher than the annual average for the years 1957-60, but the quantity of sales was about the same. In 1958 both production and sales were somewhat

below the 4-year average, and in 1959 they were at a high for the period. In 1961, production and sales were appreciably below the average for the preceding 4 years, but both recovered somewhat in 1962. On a quantity basis (square yards), sales of Wiltons and velvets in 1962 were 14 percent lower than in 1957, and 23 percent lower than in 1959, but 5 percent higher than in 1961.

U.S. exports of Wiltons and velvets in recent years have been of minor significance (table 3).

The trend of yearend inventories of Wiltons and velvets during 1957-60 was similar to that of production and sales; yearend holdings dropped slightly in 1961 and declined still further in 1962. At the close of 1962, stocks of Wiltons and velvets were 15 percent smaller than in 1957 (table 4).

U.S. Imports

U.S. annual imports for consumption of Wiltons and velvets increased from 4.7 million square yards in 1957 to 8.2 million square yards in 1961 (the highest recorded in any calendar year thus far) and then declined to 5.9 million square yards in 1962 (table 3). Imports in 1962 dutiable at the trade-agreement rate of 21 percent ad valorem were 4.4 million square yards, and those dutiable at the new rate of 40 percent ad valorem (effective June 18, 1962) were 1.5 million square yards. Imports in the period July 1, 1962-June 30, 1963, the first full year after the duty increase, were 2.4 million square yards, which was nearly 75 percent smaller than

the quantity imported in the previous 12-month period. Imports were comparably lower in January-June 1963 than in the corresponding period of 1962. The substantial decrease in imports is attributable largely to the increase in the rate of duty. The ratio of imports to apparent domestic consumption of Wiltons and velvets increased steadily from 11 percent in 1957 to 22 percent in 1961, decreased to 17 percent in 1962, and then to 6 percent in the first half of 1963.

In 1958, imports from Belgium amounted to 3.6 million square yards and accounted for about 77 percent of the total imports; those from Japan, amounting to 0.5 million square yards, supplied about 12 percent of the total (table 5). In 1961, imports from Belgium were 4.4 million square yards and accounted for 53 percent of the total; those from Japan, amounting to 3.1 million square yards, supplied 37 percent. In the 12-month period July 1962-June 1963, imports from Belgium were 1.6 million square yards (69 percent of the total) and those from Japan were 0.5 million (22 percent of the total). Less important suppliers of Wiltons and velvets were Italy, France, and the United Kingdom.

Employment and Man-Hours

The Commission obtained data on employment and man-hours from most domestic producers of Wiltons and velvets. Statistics supplied by the 19 firms whose data were used in the section on production, were used to compute the indexes of the number of workers employed and the man-hours worked for the years 1960-62 (reported in table 6).

The average number of production and related workers employed in those plants in which Wiltons and velvets were manufactured was considerably smaller in 1961 than in 1960; there was a further decline, though less pronounced, between 1961 and 1962. The total man-hours worked and the man-hours worked on Wiltons and velvets by production and related workers also decreased. Although man-hours worked on Wiltons and velvets were approximately 14 percent lower in 1962 than in 1960, production of such carpets and rugs was only about 4 percent lower in 1962 than in 1960.

Prices

Wholesale price indexes were computed (based on 1957-59 = 100) for January and June for each of the years during 1957-63 for Wiltons, velvets, and all soft-surface floor coverings (table 7). The price indexes for Wiltons, velvets, and all soft-surface floor coverings were at or near their respective highs of 104, 103, and 105 in January 1957. They were sharply lower in June 1958 but had recovered somewhat by June 1960, when the index for Wiltons was 102, that for velvets, 103, and that for all soft-surface floor coverings, 100. Between June 1960 and June 1963 the price indexes declined--the index for Wiltons to 97, that for velvets to 91, and that for all soft-surface floor coverings to 94. In June 1963 the price indexes for velvets and for all soft-surface floor coverings were the lowest in the period January 1957-June 1963; the index for Wiltons was 2 points above its low for the period.

In May 1963 a number of producers of Wiltons and velvets announced price increases averaging approximately 2 to 3 percent on their wool carpet lines; they attributed the increases to rising prices of carpet wool. Some of these producers also announced similar price increases on selected lines of carpets of manmade fibers and of wool and manmade fiber blends.

Appendix

Table 1.--Wilton, Brussels, and velvet or tapestry carpets, rugs, and mats; and carpets, rugs, and mats of like character or description: U.S. rates of duty under the Tariff Act of 1930, as modified to June 1963

Paragraph and description	Rate of duty	Effective date and origin <u>1/</u>
Par. 1117(a): <u>2/</u>		
Wilton carpets, rugs, and mats; and carpets, rugs, and mats of like character or description:		
Valued at not more than 40 cents per square foot.	40% ad val. <u>3/</u> 40% ad val. <u>4/</u> 25% ad val. 23.5% ad val. 22.5% ad val. 21% ad val. 40% ad val.	6/18/30 (statutory). 4/16/38 (BTA, Czech.). <u>5/</u> 6/6/51 (GATT). 6/30/56 (GATT). 6/30/57 (GATT). 6/30/58 (GATT). 6/18/62 (Presidential Proclamation No. 3454).
Valued at more than 40 cents per square foot.	60% ad val. <u>3/</u> 40% ad val. 30% ad val. 25% ad val. 23.5% ad val. 22.5% ad val. 21% ad val. 40% ad val.	6/18/30 (statutory). 1/1/39 (BTA, U.K.). 1/1/48 (GATT). 6/6/51 (GATT). 6/30/56 (GATT). 6/30/57 (GATT). 6/30/58 (GATT). 6/18/62 (Presidential Proclamation No. 3454).
Brussels carpets, rugs, and mats; velvet or tapestry carpets, rugs, and mats; and carpets, rugs, and mats of like character or description:		
Valued at not more than 40 cents per square foot.	40% ad val. <u>3/</u> 30% ad val. 25% ad val. 23.5% ad val. 22.5% ad val. 21% ad val. 40% ad val.	6/18/30 (statutory). 1/1/48 (GATT). 6/6/51 (GATT). 6/30/56 (GATT). 6/30/57 (GATT). 6/30/58 (GATT). 6/18/62 (Presidential Proclamation No. 3454).
Valued at more than 40 cents per square foot.	60% ad val. <u>3/</u> 40% ad val. 30% ad val. 25% ad val. 23.5% ad val. 22.5% ad val. 21% ad val. 40% ad val.	6/18/30 (statutory). 1/1/39 (BTA, U.K.). 1/1/48 (GATT). 6/6/51 (GATT). 6/30/56 (GATT). 6/30/57 (GATT). 6/30/58 (GATT). 6/18/62 (Presidential Proclamation No. 3454).

1/ BTA signifies bilateral trade agreement; GATT, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

2/ The floor coverings here described are presently provided for in item 360.45 of the Tariff Schedules of the United States.

3/ Currently applicable to the products of Communist-dominated or Communist-controlled countries or areas designated by the President pursuant to sec. 231 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

4/ Bound.

5/ Terminated Apr. 22, 1939.

Table 2.---Machine-woven and machine-tufted pile carpets and rugs:
U.S. production, by types, 1957-62

(In thousands of square yards)

Year	Machine-woven			Machine-tufted ^{2/}			Grand Total
	Wilton	All and velvet: other ^{1/}	Total	4'x6' and smaller	Over 4'x6'	Total	
1957	36,945	21,980	58,925	30,725	68,926	99,651	158,576
1958	34,258	16,802	51,060	34,057	79,583	113,640	164,700
1959	40,570	19,484	60,054	36,416	96,107	132,523	192,577
1960	31,530	16,781	48,311	2/ 38,220	2/ 113,764	2/ 151,984	200,295
1961	28,663	15,614	44,277	2/ 44,530	2/ 134,095	2/ 178,625	222,902
1962	29,512	15,275	44,787	2/ 47,695	2/ 175,157	2/ 222,852	267,639

^{1/} Includes sheen, chenille, Axminster, and others.

^{2/} Shipments.

^{3/} Not strictly comparable with prior years.

Source: Machine-woven estimated by the U.S. Tariff Commission from data supplied by domestic producers. Machine-tufted, Bureau of the Census, Facts For Industry and Current Industrial Reports.

Table 3.--Wilton and velvet carpets and rugs: U.S. production, imports for consumption, exports of domestic merchandise, and apparent consumption, 1957-62, fiscal years ending June 30, 1962, and June 30, 1963, January-June 1962, and January-June 1963

Period	Production	Imports	Exports	Apparent	Ratio of imports to--	
	square yards	square yards	square yards	consumption	Production	Consumption
	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	Percent	Percent
1957	36,945	4,671	254	41,362	12.6	11.3
1958	34,258	4,632	266	38,624	13.5	12.0
1959	40,570	6,982	196	47,356	17.2	14.7
1960	31,530	8,165	186	39,509	25.9	20.7
1961	28,663	2/ 8,234	2/ 221	36,676	28.7	22.5
1962	29,512	2/ 5,919	2/ 230	35,201	20.1	16.8
July 1, 1961-June 30, 1962	29,464	2/ 9,070	2/ 248	38,286	30.8	23.7
July 1, 1962-June 30, 1963	29,558	2/ 2,407	3/ 215	31,750	8.1	7.6
January-June--						
1962	15,198	2/ 4,508	2/ 135	19,571	29.7	23.0
1963	15,244	2/ 995	3/ 110	16,129	6.5	6.2

1/ Production plus imports minus exports.

2/ Preliminary.

3/ Estimated.

Source: Production estimated by the U.S. Tariff Commission from data supplied by domestic producers. Imports and exports compiled from official statistics of the U.S. Department of Commerce, except as noted.

Table 4.--Wilton and velvet carpets and rugs: Indexes of U.S. production, net sales, and inventories, 1957-62

(1957-60 = 100)

Year	Production (quantity)	Net sales		Inventories as of Dec. 31 (quantity)
		Quantity	Value	
1957-----	102	100	105	105
1958-----	96	98	95	95
1959-----	114	112	109	107
1960-----	88	90	91	94
1961-----	82	82	82	92
1962-----	85	86	85	88

Source: Computed from data supplied the U.S. Tariff Commission by 19 firms whose output is estimated to account for approximately 97 percent of the total production of Wilton and velvet carpets and rugs in 1962.

Table 5.--Wilton, Brussels, and velvet or tapestry carpets, rugs, and mats; and carpets, rugs, and mats of like character or description: U.S. imports for consumption, by specified sources, 1958-62, and fiscal years ending June 30, 1962, and June 30, 1963

Country	1958	1959	1960	1961		1962		1963	
				June 30	July 1	June 30	July 1	June 30	July 1
				Quantity (1,000 square yards)					
Belgium and Luxembourg	3,550	4,947	4,386	4,357	3,512	5,145		1,649	
Japan	548	1,459	3,001	3,063	1,833	3,028		529	
Italy	312	353	401	445	261	436		119	
France	88	70	193	208	178	260		62	
United Kingdom	82	108	115	114	95	135		42	
West Germany	36	27	42	36	28	50		3	
Netherlands	10	8	3	2	6	7		2/	
All other	6	10	24	9	6	9		3	
Total	4,632	6,982	8,165	8,234	5,919	9,070		2,407	
				Foreign value (1,000 dollars)					
Belgium and Luxembourg	12,121	16,032	15,518	15,458	11,446	17,672		5,291	
Japan	1,713	4,596	8,735	8,358	5,142	8,368		1,712	
Italy	1,247	1,519	1,892	2,275	1,293	2,206		609	
France	354	297	853	879	750	1,068		329	
United Kingdom	537	699	780	744	609	882		269	
West Germany	189	140	227	199	154	276		15	
Netherlands	29	29	14	15	34	39		2/	
All other	49	44	154	58	47	58		27	
Total	16,239	23,356	28,173	27,986	19,475	30,569		8,252	
				Unit value (per square yard) 4/					
Belgium and Luxembourg	\$3.41	\$3.24	\$3.54	\$3.55	\$3.26	\$3.44		\$3.21	
Japan	3.13	3.15	2.91	2.73	2.80	2.76		3.24	
Italy	4.00	4.31	4.72	5.12	4.96	5.06		5.10	
France	4.01	4.23	4.41	4.23	4.22	4.11		5.29	
United Kingdom	6.54	6.47	6.78	6.53	6.44	6.53		6.39	
West Germany	5.21	5.20	5.39	5.52	5.49	5.48		5.76	
Netherlands	2.81	3.46	4.57	6.72	5.31	5.36		6.34	
All other	8.40	4.64	6.80	6.62	8.16	6.42		9.58	
Average	3.50	3.35	3.45	3.40	3.29	3.37		3.43	

1/ Preliminary.

2/ Less than 500 yards.

3/ Less than \$500.

4/ Calculated from the unrounded figures.

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

Table 6.--Indexes of the average number of production and related workers employed and man-hours worked in plants in which 19 firms produced Wilton and velvet carpets and rugs, 1960-62

(1960-62 = 100)

Year	: Average number : employed : (all products)	: Man-hours worked on--	
		: All products	: Wiltons and velvets
1960-----	: 112	: 109	: 109
1961-----	: 97	: 97	: 97
1962-----	: 91	: 94	: 94

Source: Computed from data supplied the U.S. Tariff Commission by domestic producers.

Table 7.--Indexes of wholesale ^{1/} prices of Wiltons, velvets, and all soft-surface floor coverings, January and June 1957-63

(1957-59 = 100)

Year and month	:	:	:	:	:	
	:	Wiltons	:	Velvets	:	All soft-surface floor coverings
1957:	:		:		:	
January----	:	104	:	102	:	105
June-----	:	104	:	102	:	104
1958:	:		:		:	
January----	:	100	:	102	:	102
June-----	:	97	:	97	:	98
1959:	:		:		:	
January----	:	95	:	98	:	97
June-----	:	99	:	101	:	98
1960:	:		:		:	
January----	:	100	:	101	:	99
June-----	:	102	:	103	:	100
1961:	:		:		:	
January----	:	99	:	99	:	98
June-----	:	99	:	98	:	98
1962:	:		:		:	
January----	:	99	:	95	:	96
June-----	:	97	:	95	:	96
1963:	:		:		:	
January----	:	97	:	92	:	94
June 2/-----	:	97	:	91	:	94

^{1/} The term "wholesale," as used in the index, refers to sales in large lots at the first (primary market) level of commercial transaction; later transactions at other stages in the distribution cycle are not included.

^{2/} Preliminary.

Source: Computed from official statistics of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.