

# House Battles Tariff Issue

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17 (AP)—The House waged a nip-and-tuck opening battle over President Dwight D. Eisenhower's lower tariff foreign trade program today and administration backers wound up the day with a one-vote preliminary victory.

Protective tariff forces showed such surprising strength that they may be able to impose restrictions on the President's program when the final voting takes place tomorrow.

Eisenhower was reported to have made a last-minute move to bolster his support. Informed sources said he had written Republican Leader Joseph Martin of Massachusetts that he would not use requested tariff-cutting powers to injure American industries.

This letter, apparently to be made public by Martin in floor debate tomorrow, is counted on by administration forces to swing some doubtful votes in line.

Today's skirmishing dealt only with the rules under which the House would consider the legislation.

**Reds Fear Seapower**  
NEW YORK, Feb. 17 (AP)—Navy Secretary Charles E. Thomas expressed belief today the Communists are avoiding war in the Formosa Strait because they can not cope with American seapower.  
"For the first time in this cold war seige, they came face to face with the harsh realities of seapower at the coastline of the Formosa Strait's 100 miles of open sea," he added.

**Submarine Fuels Plane**  
The Navy said today that it has successfully tested the feasibility of fueling a seaplane from a submarine.

**Agricultural Economy Improves In Country**  
WASHINGTON Feb. 17 (AP)—Times are getting better for the farmers, Secretary of Agriculture Benson reported to Congress.  
Some signs, he told the House Agriculture Committee, point to an improvement in the country's agricultural economy. He listed them as:

1. Stabilizing farm prices and farm income after a period of adjustment from abnormal wartime demands.
2. An advancing level of per capita farm income.
3. A slight increase in agricultural assets last year.
4. Continuation of high domestic demand for food.

**Saar Agreement**  
BONN, Germany, Feb. 17 (AP)—The important Foreign Affairs Committee of the West German Bundestag reluctantly approved the French-German Saar agreement tonight, 16 votes to 13.  
Two of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's coalition parties, the Free Democrats and Refugees, deserted him to vote with the Socialist opposition.

**Pineau Faces Vote Today**  
PARIS, Feb. 17 (AP)—Christian Pineau finished preliminary work today on his effort to end France's 13-day Cabinet crisis.  
He faces his final test tomorrow—approval by the National Assembly.  
Pineau is the third man called to form a government since the fall of Pierre Mendes-France.

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