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NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO LIBERALIZE THE TARIFF LAWS FOR ART

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New York 19, N.Y.

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Miss Dorothy H. Dudley, Registrar of the Museum of Modern Art, is scheduled to testify before the Senate Finance Committee in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, July 16, in support of amendments to HR 2411 proposed by Senator Jacob Javits (R., N.Y.) to liberalize the tariff laws for works of art and other exhibition material.

According to Miss Dudley, the intent of Congress has always been to admit original works of art duty free. But many works of art recognized as such by both importers and Customs Examiners are now denied free entry because no specific provision for them is included in the present law. As an example, paintings in oil, pastel, or watercolor are admitted free. Collages, pictures made of paper, cloth, small objects and so forth, a form invented by Picasso and Braque about 1912, are taxed at 20 per cent.

"The present series of amendments," Miss Dudley says in her statement, "are an attempt by means of the most careful possible rewording of tariff paragraphs... to make the law clear enough to eliminate all obstacles to the free importation of original works of art and flexible enough to cope with inevitable innovations in style and material. If this is accomplished, administrative practice will be greatly simplified and will conform for the first time with the simple intention of Congress to admit works of art free of duty.

"The wide support for this legislation," Miss Dudley continues, "comes from professional groups, dealers, and private collectors and from the trustees, members and staffs of American museums, all of whom have long been distressed by serious inconsistencies in the tariff laws for works of art. The present language has led to such confusion that free entry for sculpture depends almost entirely upon its subject matter as shown by the title, but it can be made of almost anything... signed etchings come in free but lithographs, signed or otherwise, do not; and modern tapestries are free only if woven in a certain French factory."

Current amendments to HR 2411 represent a revised version of the Bill S-3900 introduced by Senator Javits on May 27, 1958 and the almost identical S-948 introduced by Senators Javits and Paul Douglas (D. Ill.) on February 5, 1959.

For the complete statement or further information please contact Herbert Bronstein
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