and raise retail prices, without any affirmative effect on the imbalance in prices for steers as alleged by cattlemen.

On this basis alone the pending meat quota bills should be rejected.

Reports that meat imports rise and fall unpredictably and drive down all red meat prices in the United States are incorrect. We do not believe that the so-called peaks and valleys occur just with imports. They occur everywhere as is demonstrated by the fact that total U.S. supplies and total U.S. commercial beef production necessarily rise in response to high demand. This is particularly true in consumption of hamburger, frankfurters, and similar products during the outdoor cooking season which extends from about May to September in the North and Northeast and from April to November in the South and west coast areas.

Accepting the fact that the volume of all meat supplied, including imports, experiences ups and downs, such movements are not meaningful if they are (*a*) predictable, and (*b*) have no negative effect on prices.

A review of official USDA reports shows that peaks and valleys which exist in the meat industry are generally predictable, do not have any negative effect on prices, and cannot be related to imported meat. Imported manufacturing meat and domestic cow meat do not affect prime meat pricing. The average prices paid for choice steers since the effective date of the present quota system, Public Law 88–482, were $23.12 in 1964, $26.19 in 1965, $26.29 in 1966 and in 1967, $26.04 per hundredweight. Monthly reports for 1968 indicate the following significant trends: January, $26.76; February, $27.34; March, $27.75; April, $27.49, for an average so far this year of $27.34 per hundredweight. In the case of manufacturing meat, average utility grade live prices were: 1964, $13.74; 1965, $14.46; 1966, $18.02; 1967, down slightly to $17.52 per hundredweight; and during the period January through April of this year: $16.35, $17.98, $19.09; and in April, a 10-year high of $19.88 per hundredweight, for a 4-month 1968 average of $18.32 per hundredweight.

It is I believe fair to assume that any damage to the cattlemen and feeders resulting from fluctuations in domestic supply and imports—predictable though they are—should be reflected in price structure. But what has happened since 1964? Choice steer prices, on an annual average, have risen by 12.7 percent since 1964 while prices for utility grade manufacturing beef, directly competitive with imports, have gone up 27 percent. It cannot be said that imports have destroyed any real chance for profits.

Since peaks and valleys have been raised as the "bogeyman" let's take a look at imports during the first 3 months of this year, at which time average prices for choice and manufacturing meats were reaching high levels within the existing quota system. During the period January to March 1968, fresh frozen bone-in and boneless beef imports were 193.3 million pounds, as opposed to about 181.2 million pounds during the same period in 1967. But average prices for all beef reached near record levels.

Again I would like to leave my text. Our brief will document the fact that the highest peaks in meat availability and the deepest valleys in beef supplies occur in domestic production, not imports.