Domestic beekeepers cannot continue to operate on a 60% of parity price. The ads in the bee journals show that each year more beekeepers are anxious to sell to a dwindling number of newcomers. Honey prices remain at the 1942 levels.

Table II shows that our beehive count has dwindled from a high in 1947 of 5,916,000 to 4,770,000 in 1966. In less than 20 years, we have lost 20% of our bees. Can the agricultural economy stand the loss? Maybe! The need for bees to pollinate more than 70 food and fiber crops cannot be overemphasized. S. E. McGregor, Apiculture specialist, from the USDA, says: "This industry (beekeeping) is now in a depressed condition when it should be increased 20 fold."

During a 15 year period from 1953 through 1967 imports have consistently undersold the domestic honey market. Table V shows that the import prices follow about the same trend of our export prices, but always lower. The 1967 figures reflect the greatest spread of 7 cents per pound. This would indicate that our costs are increasing, while other countries are cutting prices.

Honey production in Argentina and Mexico has been increasing during the past 10 years. About 90% of our imported honey comes from these countries. Domestic beekeepers are more concerned with heavy imports of Argentine honey since it is used mostly for the bottling trade. Mexican honey seems to offer less competition since most of the Mexican honey is used for the baking trade. Domestic honey production could easily fill this baking need, but our prices would be higher.

Argentine honey shipments to this country commenced in 1959. (See Table IV.) Shipments have varied from 1 million pounds to a high in 1967 of 9 million pounds. We expect this upward trend to continue, since the United States honey market is the best in the world. The 1 cent per pound duty is too low to slow imports from countries whose standard of living is below ours.

Our legislation HR 10677 and other bills pending in the House are designed to protect the domestic honey industry by raising the duty from 1 cent to 3 cents per pound and imposing limitations on honey shipments coming into this country. Since this country is the top producer and consumer of honey, an increase in our duty will automatically strengthen the honey market all over the world. However, we expect the world honey price to remain lower than ours. This legislation would also help us increase our prices from a low of 60% of parity.

We urge the Committee act favorably on our legislation, HR 10677. Please consider the following points during your deliberation:

1. Foreign beekeepers do nothing to promote a market for honey.
2. Other than the low 1 cent per pound duty on honey, foreign producers do not support our government.
3. Domestic costs of honey production are much greater than costs in Argentina and Mexico.
4. The domestic honey production can supply the demand.
5. Bees render a service to agriculture. More than 70 food and fiber crops depend entirely on bees for production or produce heavier crops when flowers are freely visited by bees.
6. The average market price of our domestic honey is approximately 60% of parity—far below the price support levels.
7. Our beehive number is dwindling and many beekeepers are anxious to sell.

Five exhibits and charts follow: