

Mr. WILLSON. This, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, is graded as nontable and other table honey.

What "other table honey" is, I, as a man who makes my living out of trading in honey, cannot define for you, cannot explain it to you, but I would say that these categories of other table and nontable honey constitute probably not more than 2 or 3 percent of our total production in the United States. In other words, it is inconsequential.

Mr. BYRNES. Can you tell me why in 1965 imports rose by almost two and a half times over 1964, and again increased in 1967 over the average of the last number of years by over two times? Why, in these two years, have you had the increase?

Mr. WILLSON. We have these fluctuations from time to time.

Mr. Gibson has some charts appended to his paper which are very interesting. You see curves like this in honey production based on the great variation in crop production.

Honey is very sensitive in its production to rainfall, for example.

Now, this year, in Argentina, I had two contracts to buy Argentine honey, and I was given in one case one and a half cents a pound, and in another case one and a quarter cents, to cancel the contracts, because they didn't have the honey this year.

They just didn't make the honey down there this year, and that is what frequently happens. It can happen in the Plains States in the United States. It can happen in Glenn Gibson's territory in Oklahoma. We can have a crop failure due to bad weather conditions.

Mr. BYRNES. You attribute that increase in imports to bad conditions relating to domestic production?

Mr. WILLSON. One other factor, sir.

I am glad you asked that question, because my answer would not be complete without saying this: If, for example, Argentina should have a bumper crop, they would be willing to take a lower price than if they had, let's say, an ordinary or medium crop.

If they have a bumper crop, in order to get rid of it, they do sell it at a lower price, and we take advantage of that lower price and bring it into the United States.

But this year we can't buy it at any price, because it isn't there.

Mr. BYRNES. Why have you had a steady decline in U.S. production since 1963?

Mr. WILLSON. That is not an easy question for me to answer, and I don't know whether there is an easy or ready answer to that question.

I do know from talking to honey producers in all parts of the United States at the meetings that I go to that there is scarcely an area in the United States where a man can go into commercial honey production without infringing on the territory of another commercial honey producer.

The territory in the United States, as far as commercial honey production is concerned, is pretty well filled up.

Now, there can be areas like Wyoming and Montana, where for 5 years they have had crop failures due to lack of rainfall, and the beekeepers move away. They have no alternative.

Mr. BYRNES. I was impressed at the figures that show—and again these are Government figures—a constant decline, whereas consumption has stayed relatively level, hasn't it, at around 244 million pounds?

Mr. WILLSON. Yes, despite the fact that we have had a greatly increased population.