

I am the chairman of the Florida Tomato Committee, which is the administrative body of the Florida tomato marketing agreement and order.

It would be futile to attempt to impose orderly marketing programs on our domestic producers with uncontrolled imports from Mexico.

Fortunately, under such a program, we can control both the grade and size of both our own shipments and the imports through section 8E of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended.

But it would take quantitative controls of imports in order to maintain orderly marketing conditions for both foreign and domestic fruits and vegetables.

We see an answer to this problem in the bill before you, H.R. 16416, entitled the "Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Market-Sharing Act of 1968," and H.R. 16992, which would give the foreign producer a fair share of our market and require more orderly distribution of the volume of shipments.

If legislation of this type is not enacted soon, we will not only be forced out of business in these crops which are so vulnerable to the foreign competition from low-wage countries, but our consumers will become entirely dependent on foreign sources for these products, which we believe would be a very unwise policy on the part of our Government.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for your consideration of my views in these hearings.

Mr. HERLONG. Thank you, sir.

The next witness is Mr. J. S. Peters.

STATEMENT OF JOHN S. PETERS

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chairman, my name is John S. Peters and I am manager of the Membership and Industry Relations Division of Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, a nonprofit agricultural trade association, representing growers of a majority of the fruits and vegetables produced in Florida.

Prior to my present position, I was actively engaged in the production and marketing of tomatoes and my former partnership with Luther Chandler and Cecil Barber (both of whom are deceased) was active in the organization of Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association in 1943.

My present position requires continuing current information on conditions affecting the membership of this association, including crop prospects and product movement in Florida and competing areas.

U.S. FRUIT AND VEGETABLE TRADE

Over the years, Florida growers have been threatened with reduction or removal of the tariff on fresh fruits and vegetables. However, in the past few years, the import duty has become progressively less effective as domestic agricultural labor costs have skyrocketed and wages in foreign competing areas have remained ridiculously low. This has resulted in the U.S. markets being flooded at times with imports of many fruits and vegetables from low-wage countries.

It has already been stated that Mexico is the major foreign exporter