On August 31, 1967, Senator Spessard L. Holland communicated with the Secretary of Agriculture as a followup to a letter he had written on June 19 of that year, pointing out the precarious situation which had developed as a result of these increasing imports as follows:

The 1967–1968 acreage marketing guide for Florida vegetables issued by the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Florida, after pointing up the fact that overabundant supplies depress markets and that growers should keep production in line with market demand, makes the following significant statement which clearly illustrates the plight of the Florida vegetable grower:

"A major factor affecting the volume of imports from Mexico is the prevailing price level in the United States. If production and marketing costs in the United States continue to increase relative to cost levels in Mexico, there will be corresponding increases in imports. Tomatoes, cucumbers, and possibly peppers are likely to continue their sharp upward trend. Mexico's shift to vine-ripened tomatoes, precooling, and improved shipping facilities may have added to its advantage over the United States tomato industry. United States imports of winter vegetables from Mexico are likely to continue the upward trend in the years ahead."

Senator Holland called upon the Department of Agriculture for their recommendations and advice as to correcting the situation but the Department was unable to provide any such recommendation or advice.

I am including Senator Holland's entire letter as appendix D to my statement.

RECOGNITION OF ADVERSE EFFECT

The other members of the Florida congressional delegation also communicated with responsible branches of the U.S. Government on bringing the seriousness of this problem to their attention and requesting the solution thereto.

Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association files contain numerous copies of these exchanges of communication; but without burdening the record with them, suffice it to say that responses from the executive branch have been unsatisfactory and inaction has accomplished nothing toward a solution of this very grave situation.

In transmitting the proposed Trade Expansion Act of 1968, President Johnson recognized the ineffectiveness of present laws for relief from the adverse effects of imports. Unfortunately, the proposed assistance program contained in this bill will not be of benefit to highly perishable short-season vegetable crops such as the ones being produced with low-cost labor in Mexico and indiscriminately placed in disorderly competition with fresh produce grown in this country.

PROPOSED CORRECTIVE LEGISLATION

This is the reason why I am here today before this committee as are the others concerned with the future of our American fruit and vegetable industry in this country, requesting that you give serious consideration to the type of legislation proposed as H.R. 16416, and H.R. 16992, entitled the "Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Market-Sharing Act of 1968." This legislation, like the meat import law of 1964, does not actually impose quotas, but sets up the mechanics for establishing targets which imports cannot exceed in any year. It recognizes the seasonal nature of fresh fruits and vegetables by permitting the importation of as much as 25 percent of the target figure during any 1 month and permits increases as the U.S. market grows.