Appendix B

FLORIDA FRUIT & VEGETABLE ASSOCIATION,
June 16, 1967.

Hon. SPESSARD L. HOLLAND, Hon. GEORGE A. SMATHERS, Hon. ROBERT L. F. SIKES, Hon. DON FUQUA, Hon. CHARLES E. BENNETT, Hon. SYDNEY HERLONG, Jr., Hon. EDWARD J. GURNEY, Hon. SAM GIBBONS, Hon. JAMES A. HALEY, Hon. WILLIAM C. CRAMER, Hon. PAUL G. ROGERS, Hon. J. HEBERT BURKE, Hon. CLAUDE D. PEPPER, and Hon. DANTE B. FASCELL.

GENTLEMEN: For some years now we have seen the threat of foreign competition from low-wage areas, principally Mexico and the Caribbean countries, making disastrous inroads into our fruit and vegetable industries. This season the problem reached critical proportions among many of our Florida producers to such an extent that the agri-business community, which includes farm equipment and supply groups, bankers, merchants and labor, has voiced great concern over this deplorable situation. You have heard about it, read newspaper accounts of meetings and received many communications.

I have corresponded with you and furnished you factual information about the growth of this problem for quite a few years and you have responded admirably in trying to seek an answer and possible solution from responsible agencies of government, and a number of you have introduced bills that would in part mitigate the onslaught of these imports on our own economy. I can say without being facetious that if someone wanted to refer to all the background information and efforts contained in our own Association files on this subject, it would take no less than a moving van to transport the material accumulated over the years. Therefore I am not going to burden you with a historical recital of this problem since your own files and your own knowledge of this matter are probably as replete as mine.

In short we have reached the critical point in that the people affected who have to meet payrolls and pay their bills can't help but feel that we have not been very effective in dealing with this serious problem. I know and you know that it is not an easy problem to resolve but there must be a better solution to it than to leave our industries at the complete mercy of countries who are not only exploiting our markets but are doing so advantageously by exploiting their own labor.

As you will recall Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz has strongly objected to the importation of foreign workers employed in this country, even at our higher standards, if the very presence of these workers "adversely affected" the employment of our domestic workers. He has quite successfully and effectively exercised his view in this matter through his certification authority for bringing in foreign workers and by his adverse effect criteria. Perhaps a page of his book should be used in controlling the importation of commodities produced with peon labor. Otherwise we have left the back door wide open to be flooded with imports of this origin.

Tariffs at their presently low levels have long ceased to be a satisfactory means of equalizing costs of production and thereby controlling imports, in the light of the tremendous wage differentials and other related labor costs which exist in our country vis-a-vis Mexico. We must therefore resort to some form of flexible import limitations which when interpreted to mean *quotas* has a bad connotation with the free traders in our State Department and other internationally minded high officials in our executive branch. More recently I heard the term "market sharing" used by an official of the Department of Agriculture in relation to foreign imports. This perhaps might have a more palatable connotation. And here again I must emphasize that no one is asking for the total exclusion of imports of competitive commodities but rather better control so as to give the domestic producers first consideration in the market place as have the American workers under the Secretary of Labor's adverse effect criteria, which I have already mentioned.