

Mr. HERLONG. Are there further questions?

Mr. Chairman, reference is made in here to a statement that was filed by Mr. Curl of Texas Citrus Mutual. I read that statement myself and in that statement it stated that a letter from the Department of Commerce had indicated that this was a progressive reduction in tariffs on citrus, particularly oranges, coming into the United States.

I know you are interested in this, too. I was personally told both by Governor Herter when he was in charge of this program and later by Ambassador Roth that there had been no negotiations over there with reference to citrus in the Kennedy round, and I would like, Mr. Chairman, for this committee to inquire of the Department of Commerce as to the authority for such a statement that the duty on citrus, for example, is to be progressively reduced from 1 cent a pound to 6 cents a pound over the next 4 years.

I will probably talk later to Mr. Rutledge about that but I would want this committee to get that information from the Department of Commerce to see what authority they had for making such a statement in view of what had been previously told to me—I am informed that we do have this information.

There were no reductions on oranges. This report showed it is all citrus and that is the thing we are concerned about.

Are there further questions of these witnesses?

If not, we want to thank you for your contribution and for being here with us. We appreciate it very much.

Mr. Cox. Thank you.

(The following statement of Representative Paul G. Rogers, of Florida, was received by the committee:)

STATEMENT OF HON. PAUL G. ROGERS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. Chairman:

I appreciate very much the opportunity afforded me by the Committee to present my views concerning H.R. 16416 which I co-sponsored with Mr. Herlong, a distinguished Member of this Committee and my colleague from Florida.

This bill would provide access to the United States markets for foreign produced fresh fruits and vegetables on an equitable and orderly market-sharing basis consistent with the maintenance of a strong and expanding United States production and is designed to avoid disruption of the domestic fruit and vegetable market, and unemployment of domestic workers.

The particular problem confronting the fresh fruit and vegetable growers in Florida is the drastic increase in imports from Mexico.

The past 12 years have witnessed a five-fold increase in fresh vegetable imports from Mexico.

From January 1, 1968 to May 1, 1968, Mexico marketed one-half of the fresh tomatoes consumed in the United States. Also, Florida some years ago, had 90% of the Canadian tomato market; now Mexico has 90% and Florida has only 10%.

Florida citrus is also particularly injured by imports of oranges and tangerines from Mexico. Texas, California and Arizona are also hard hit.

In 1966, orange imports from Mexico into the United States were 258 carloads. In 1967, there were 2,323 carloads—a nine-fold increase.

Florida's fresh fruit and vegetable growers cannot continue to compete with these heavy imports from low-wage areas and hope to maintain a steady economy in the State.

I trust that the Committee has benefitted from the testimony from representatives of Florida's fruit and vegetable industry, and that proper legislative action will be taken, commensurate with the gravity of the problem.

Mr. HERLONG. Our next witness is Mr. Robert Rutledge of the Florida Citrus Mutual. Mr. Rutledge, we are happy to have you and Mr.