

States should increase the tariffs or other protection for canned tomatoes.

First is the fact that of all the canning crops grown in the United States, tomatoes account for the largest total value. They are worth \$320,218,000 at the farm before they leave for the processing plants.

Tomatoes and tomato products account for the largest product volume of any commodity line in our industry.

A good deal of hand labor is employed in tomato canning. In my plant in Ohio, as in other canneries in the United States, we pay the legal minimum wage of \$1.60 per hour, and much higher for most of our personnel. At the same time the price of cans went up 5½ percent last year. Our total costs were up in 1967 a total of 15 percent over 1966 costs. A large portion of that increase in our operating costs results from action by the Congress in raising the minimum wage.

I would have you gentlemen know that in our industry never since the first wage rates were established back in 1933 and 1934 have we ever appeared before Congress and objected to the raise in the minimum wage.

Also in 1967, field labor came under a minimum wage for agricultural workers at the direction of the Secretary of Labor.

We are competing with countries whose labor costs are much lower than ours.

In order to assure a supply of tomatoes of suitable quality for processing in our cannery in Minster, Ohio, we grow all of our own tomatoes. By integrating the farming and canning operations, the Minster Canning Co. is better able than many other canners to control costs.

But, with only one source of income—arising out of the sale of our finished canned food products—we are unable to compete either in our farm operations or in our canning operations with the low cost imports from Spain and other countries. A number of other tomato processors have integrated their farming and canning in the same manner.

The people employed in growing the tomatoes, those employed in the plant and the warehouse—all depend on our ability to stay alive in the tomato canning business. The jobs and incomes of many people in our community are jeopardized by the situation which now threatens us.

I would like to propose that the tariffs on canned tomatoes and on tomato paste be increased by at least 50 percent above the rates existing prior to the Kennedy round. However, I am not at all sure that imports from low cost supplying countries can be dealt with by tariff increase alone.

As the major problem at the present time appears to be the price differential between domestic canned tomatoes and tomato products and the imported products, a tariff increase would be helpful in protecting our pricing.

The total imports of tomatoes and tomato products in 1967 were double the imports of 1966. Very many doublings of imports of canned tomatoes and tomato products each year could easily spell disaster to the domestic production.