percent of parity to date while Florida growers have received 66 percent of parity (USDA C&MS—F & V Citrus Fruits: Estimated Equivalent On-Tree Returns and Parity Prices 3–29–68).

Last season, Texas had an orange crop of 2.8 million boxes and marketed through fresh fruit channels 2,986 cars (500 boxes per car). Mexico imported through the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, 256 cars for a combined total of 3,242 cars oranges shipped from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas into its marketing area. Hurricane Beulah, which occurred in September, 1967, reduced the Texas orange crop this season to 1.9 million boxes but there has been shipped from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas 4,580 cars of oranges of which 2,319 cars originated in Texas and 2,261 in Mexico, or about 40 percent more than the total shipments last season. Were it not for the December, 1967, freeze in California which reduced its crop and the much smaller crop occurring in Florida this season, the percentage of parity received by Texas growers would have been much lower.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The domestic producers of citrus fruit, faced with constantly increasing costs, cannot successfully compete with the foreign producers due to the vast differential in costs of production and a wholly inadequate tariff. Larger plantings of citrus are occurring in foreign countries each year and production will vastly exceed their ability to market in their own countries this increase. The domestic producer of Texas citrus fruit is and has been receiving far below parity for his fruit. Mexico has closed its borders to citrus fruit produced in the United States while increasing its exports of citrus fruit to the United States. This action will continue to drain dollars from the United States and force the domestic producer of citrus fruit from his traditional markets.

It is recommended that action be taken to establish a tariff which will fairly represent the difference in costs of production experienced in the United States and in foreign countries or a quota system instituted of the type embraced in H.R. 16416 referred to as the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Market Sharing Act of 1968 which has been referred to this Committee. Unless such action is taken immediately, the domestic market for citrus fruit will be disrupted by constantly increasing citrus imports from foreign areas whose wage scale, costs of production and standard of living are far below those existing in the United States.

Statement of Albert E. Mercker, Executive Secretary, Vegetable Growers Association of America

The Vegetable Growers Association of America was founded in 1908 and has a membership of approximately 3,000 small vegetable growers in 35 States and 32 affiliate Associations in 30 States.

We wish to bring to the attention of the Committee the impact that the import of vegetables and strawberries makes upon the United States producer and the labor used to produce those crops. We can not cite all of the impact of these imports on all vegetables but this statement relates to specific information we do have with respect to imports of fresh tomatoes and fresh and processed strawberries. These producers feel the impact because of their curtailed market outlets and the effect that the competition has upon their prices.

The importation of tomatoes is felt very seriously by the producers of greenhouse, winter, early spring and late spring seasonal tomato crops. Therefore, we support H. R. 16416, The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Act of 1968. This bill would permit the market sharing arrangements with other countries as was pointed out in the statement by the Honorable Orville L. Freeman, Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to an arrangement made by the Department of Agriculture in supporting "the enactment of a meat import law of 1964 (Public Law 88–482)". This law does not impose quotas but it sets a target which imports can not exceed in any year without "triggering" quotas.

Strawberries.—In 1963 we imported 3,794,000 lbs. of fresh strawberries and 34,550,000 lbs. of processed strawberries, making a total of 38,344,000 lbs. In 1967 we imported a total of 21,736,000 lbs. of fresh strawberries or 570% of the fresh strawberry imports of 1963. Imports of processed strawberries amounted to 74,659,000 or 201% of the imports of 1963.