

quartered in Nogales, Arizona which is in the congressional district I represent. This is an association of 44 fruit and vegetable importers.

The association study is impressive. It strongly contradicts the argument that domestic produce growers face cheaper costs than do their Mexican counterparts.

This Mexican-grown produce is of great importance to our friendly neighbor, to the businessmen of the Southwest and to the housewives all over America. I hope the committee members will give this document careful consideration as it sheds considerable light on the importance of maintaining a relatively free flow of fresh fruits and vegetables across our border with Mexico.

Sincerely,

MORRIS K. UDALL.

STATEMENT OF WEST MEXICO VEGETABLE DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION, A. B. CONARD,
SECRETARY-MANAGER

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN MOVES TO RESTRICT THE IMPORTATION OF PRODUCE
FROM MEXICO

The West Mexico Vegetable Distributors Association of Nogales, Arizona, comprised of 44 member distributors, engaged in marketing and nationwide distribution of fresh fruit and vegetables in the United States and Canada all of which are imported from the West Coast of Mexico, in an effort to clarify our position with regard to moves on protectionist type legislation and bills pending in the Congress and foreign trade policies in general, wish to present the following views and facts for consideration and for the record.

It has become quite evident to us that the principal objection offered and continually brought out by domestic producers in the United States is the statement that goods or products produced in foreign countries, where the cost of labor is admittedly less than wages paid in our country, are being imported in increasing quantities and that domestic industries and workers are being injured by what they term unfair competition and the claim that foreign products can be imported at a fraction of the costs they are faced with.

We believe it is important to recognize that there are more considerations involved in our trade policy and in the objections being raised by American producers than the relative wages paid workers in a particular industry here and in other countries. We, therefore, will undertake to not only clarify labor cost factors in our particular industry but also discuss some of the other considerations that must be included to round out the total picture of what is involved in the importation of our products and the cost of delivering these products to the American markets.

Labor Costs: As for the question of just how cheap labor really is in Mexico, it might be well first to cover some of the fringe benefits and other programs which are related to labor and the overall costs beside the salaries themselves. The Growers Associations are taking an enlightened outlook toward the labor force through two separate programs. One, run in conjunction with the experimental farm system, is designed to produce skilled workers to handle increasingly complex farming methods. They maintain a special school and share costs half and half with the government at the Cullican valley's experimental station. It is a special six months course to train foremen and field supervisors, tractor and machinery operators, and other skilled people they need. The people who come out of these classes are assured of permanent jobs at much higher wages, 40 pesos or more, compared with the prevailing of 25 pesos, on the bigger farms. Since the large vegetable farms need workers all year round the Associations have also undertaken a basic farm housing program. The vegetable exporters pay a special assessment on each box shipped and put aside a special parcel of land on their property. The land is used for housing and the fund pays half of the cost of construction; the worker pays the other half and owns his own home. These projects create a family type permanent labor force such as the California vegetable shippers are trying to establish with their individual housing programs. The adults—men and women alike—work in the fields through the growing season and then a part of them move to the packing houses while the remainder handle the harvest. The work in the packing houses is easier and better paying than the field work. The packers, nearly all of them women in the Cullican area, are paid on a piece rate of 45 to 50 centavos per box of tomatoes while the other shed workers are paid an hourly rate of three to four pesos. Good packers earn wages, which by Mexican standards are fantastic—12 to 20 pesos per hour with the