

Take, for example, the situation with respect to the steel industry. While the demand for iron and steel mill products is rising in this country, domestic producers are losing ground, percentage-wise, compared to foreign producers. This alarming trend is of fairly recent origin, but can be expected to worsen if we fail to tackle the problem soon.

Ten years ago, for example, this country's steel imports were roughly equal to exports. Since then, a serious gap has developed as imports have risen to more than 10 million tons while exports remain at about 2 million tons. The most disturbing jump has occurred in the past 3 years. In 1964, the import-export deficit was about 3 million tons. Today, the trade gap stands at 9 million tons—a threefold increase.

Obviously, this runaway trend must be halted, and the sooner the better. Cheaper labor costs and increasing technology of foreign producers are significant factors giving other countries a price advantage over domestic producers.

And what applies to the steel industry applies to the others I have mentioned. In recent months I have visited with many mink ranchers in my State, and some from other States, as well, who simply are backed up to the wall economically. They need help. And they need it from the Congress and the administration. Either they get it or, as Mr. Ralph E. Westwood, a prominent mink rancher and president of Emba Mink Breeders Association says, “* * * there will be no mink ranching business in the United States.” Mr. Westwood, I believe, is scheduled to testify before this committee at these hearings, if he has not done so already.

While import quotas and trade barriers may be anathema to some, I must say that I prefer them to the present alternative: that of forcing our own people out of business and into financial ruin. For my part, I think it is time that we begin concerning ourselves first with conditions here at home; and secondly with the welfare of our foreign competitors. I am not opposed to helping stabilize the economies of other peoples in other lands. I believe that we should, insofar as practicable, do what we can to help them. For in so doing, we help not only them but ourselves as well. But we have got to realize that there is no wisdom in helping others if we destroy our own people in the process—and this, in some instances, is what we are doing. Our aim should be to strike a happy balance between our own self-interest and that of our neighbors. But I submit that under present policy there is little or no balance at all.

Our dairy people, our livestock raisers, the lead and zinc industry, and our textile manufacturers, like the steel and mink people, also suffer from an overdose of foreign competition. To correct this situation I have introduced a number of bills. I refer specifically to H.R. 54 relating to lead-zinc import quotas, H.R. 7573 on dairy imports, H.R. 9375 dealing with meat imports, H.R. 11745 on textiles, H.R. 14089 on steel imports, and H.R. 10422 to establish mink import quotas. In addition, I fully support other bills of a similar vein introduced in both Houses and sponsored by many Members of both parties which are designed to lend help to our American producers in this critical time. There is no need for me to go into each of these areas in detail because expert witnesses for all of the concerned industries have or will appear at these hearings.