

CRITICAL SITUATION OF MINK INDUSTRY

The first area of concern that I would like to discuss is the problem faced by our Nation's mink ranchers. Mr. Chairman, this is not a large industry. Only 3,300 ranchers were recorded in the recent Tariff Commission investigation. In Wisconsin, however, it is a very important industry.

Mink pelts account for a large dollar volume in the Wisconsin agricultural market. This industry ranks second to dairy products in dollar volume.

Perhaps the easiest way to dramatize the problems our mink ranchers face is to point out that while we have some 3,300 ranchers today, in 1962 we had more than twice that number.

During your hearings, you will receive a substantial amount of statistics on mink imports and other commodities. I will not try to duplicate that here but only point out that one of the reasons for the decline in the number of mink ranchers during the past few years is the increased percentage of the domestic market held by imports.

Mink production in the United States almost doubled during the years 1956-66. In 1956 the net domestic production (less exports) was 4,345,000, and in 1966 the net domestic production was 7,863,000. In 1956, the ratio of imports to U.S. consumption of mink was 30.03 percent. In 1966 this ratio jumped to 54 percent.

If our domestic mink industry is to survive, then we must assist our mink ranchers. One of the only effective ways of doing that is to reasonably limit imports.

I have worked during the past year with the U.S. Department of Commerce in attempting to get imports reduced on a voluntary basis and to provide adequate statistical information on domestic and foreign production for the mink industry.

In addition, I have joined with a number of my colleagues in introducing legislation that would provide a sliding ceiling on the amount of imports allowed into this country each year. That ceiling would be based on 30 percent of the domestic production for that year.

This legislation, H.R. 11340, should, I believe, be favorably acted upon by this committee and the Congress.

CRITICAL SITUATION OF LEATHER INDUSTRY

Mr. Chairman, the second area of concern which I would like to discuss is the drastic increase in footwear imports during the past few years. During the first quarter of this year, imports of footwear of all types amounted to 65,096,400 pairs, an increase of 35 percent over the same period last year. This equaled 31.2 percent of the domestic production estimated at 208,818,000 pairs for the 3-month period.

This matter deserves immediate attention. The threat to our domestic shoe and leather industry is extremely serious, and this committee has before it legislation designed to provide orderly marketing which I support.

This threat is very real in my Sixth District of Wisconsin, Mr. Chairman, for both labor and management.

Theodore Hasse, president of the Oshkosh Tanning Co., at Oshkosh, Wis., has told me that unless this import tide is controlled and stopped,