

were imported and according to the latest information I have been able to obtain, up to June 30 of last year over 4,500,000 skins had been imported. If that rate of imports continues there is little question about what will happen to the domestic producer.

I should point out that my interest is not only in the overall problem, but we have 70 mink ranches in South Dakota with an investment of \$3,877,000 and in 1966 we produced 170,000 pelts. It should also be pointed out that our ranchers spent \$1,421,000 in producing these 170,000 pelts which meant that much more to the economy of South Dakota.

It should be pointed out that the domestic mink industry means considerably more to the overall economy than just the production of mink skins. The food bill including cereals, fish and poultry by-products, meat scraps, liver and fortifications in 1966 amounted to \$68,892,000. When a mink rancher is put out of business because of unfair, unequal, and unjust foreign competition, the chicken farmer, the hog and cattle producer, the slaughter and packing houses are deprived of a ready market for a valuable by-product that cannot otherwise be disposed of for profit. So, again the consumers of cereals, fish and meat will be required to pay more for what they buy because the value of these by-products cannot be credited to the cost of their foods.

The sad thing is, Mr. Chairman, that 40 percent of the domestic ranchers have been driven out of business because 42 percent of the consumption of mink pelts has been taken over by foreign imports. To point up again the danger for the future of this industry, mink imports have doubled since 1960. If this condition is permitted to continue more than 50 percent of the domestic mink industry will be written off. When it is written off, it will have serious repercussions on the balance of the domestic economy. Equally as serious, the growing imports which today are taking some \$75 million out of the country annually will add materially to our balance of payments problem.

If some action is not taken and taken soon, we will have a bankrupt agricultural enterprise on our hands. Many of the executive branch are decrying the exodus of farmers to the city. Instead of attacking the problem after these people have been driven into the city, after they have added to the already expensive programs of retraining and providing housing and community facilities for them, let's give them a fair chance to make a fair living in the country where they prefer to live, by giving them some degree of protection from this unfair foreign competition.

This is a time of crisis for the domestic mink rancher and the time is long past due for us in Government to start protecting our own first.

Attached hereto and made a part hereof, the same as though fully incorporated at this point, is a letter from William F. Fitzgerald, president of the New York Auction Co., Inc. of New York City, whose job it is to operate a fur auction and who has seen the dangers to the domestic mink industry, to the domestic economy, and to the consumer, from these constantly growing foreign imports. The letter follows: