foreign mink producers access to a fair share of our market on a duty-free basis with their share automatically increasing as consumption expands in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, I respectfully urge this committee to act favorably on this mink legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there any questions? If not, then thank you, Mr. Kastenmeier, for sharing your views with us.

Mr. KASTENMEIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Our next witness is from Minnesota, the Honorable Ancher Nelsen. Mr. Nelsen, we appreciate your being with us this morning and you are recognized, sir.

STATEMENT OF HON. ANCHER NELSEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. NELSEN. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this committee and to once again express my view that unwarranted foreign imports are ravaging the American mink industry.

Last fall the U.S. Tariff Commission conducted a study which, according to Presidential order, was to look into the condition of the domestic mink industry. In its report released in April of this year, the Tariff Commission did not bring to light even a hint of the fact that mink ranchers are going out of business at the rate of almost three a day.

The reason for the present-day economic plight of the industry is that prices have been undercut by a flood of imports. American producers must sell their pelts at as much as $5 below the cost of production.

In 1966, 5,675,000 raw mink fur skins were brought into the country. Last year only slightly fewer came in. The only reason a smaller amount was imported in 1967 was that the low prices in American markets even discouraged some Scandinavian and European producers.

At the present time, foreign producers are supplying over 40 percent of the American market. The flood of imports has caused the failure of thousands of mink ranchers. It has taken workers off the tax rolls and put families on the welfare list.

The mink import situation has damaged the American balance of payments and has contributed to the gold crisis. America has now a little over $10 billion of gold, the lowest level since the thirties.

Mr. Chairman, foreign mink producers have drastically lower costs. Wages, feed, land, and overhead expenses are less abroad. The American producer's problem is compounded by fiscal and monetary policies which result in an inflation that pushes his costs even higher.

Without legislative relief, the mink in America will be relegated to the zoo. We need legislation to regulate the amount of mink fur skins that can be imported. My proposal, H.R. 9979, will not slam the door on imports, but its enactment would allow the American mink ranchers to achieve a fair price with reasonable opportunity to expect an equitable profit.

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate your bringing to us your thoughts, Mr. Nelsen.

Our colleague from New York, the Honorable Samuel S. Stratton, is our next witness.