

exported to the United States from Scandinavian countries runs \$3 to \$5 less in price than those pelts shipped by them to their other markets in France, West Germany, Italy, and elsewhere.

The National Board of Fur Farm Organizations, which is the spokesman for the domestic ranching industry, advises me that in 1962 there were 7,200 mink ranchers in the United States and today there are only 3,195. In my own district, even as short a time as a year ago, we had 58 mink ranches and today there are only 47. This is a tragic dropout rate for any domestic business. The board advises me that as recently as 1960 imports of mink into the United States only amounted to 2,846,000 pelts. In 1967 imports amounted to 5,426,000 pelts which is a startling increase of nearly 100 percent. With this tremendous influx of foreign pelts at low prices it is not surprising that the domestic rancher cannot compete.

My bill, and others like it, provides that the first 40 percent of estimated domestic consumption would be permitted into this country quota and duty free. After this original 40 percent, there would be a 50 percent ad valorem assessed. I feel that this formula is fair because it will assure the domestic rancher of at least 40 percent of the market he created himself, and yet would give the foreign producer the chance to share in any increase in domestic consumption.

Some of the foreign interests who have appeared before this committee have said there was no problem because prices this year are better than they were last year at this time. Granted, they are better, but this is only relative. I have been supplied some information concerning all pelts sold at auction in New York through marketing cooperatives and independent shippers. The price averages of this season as of June 1 have increased only slightly over prices for the same period last year when prices were at disaster levels. In the period December 1, 1966, to June 1, 1967, there were a total of 3,965,922 pelts sold at an average price of \$14.95. In the similar period this season beginning December 1, 1967, and ending June 1, 1968, a total of 4,614,449 pelts were sold at an average price of \$15.49, which I might point out is still below the cost of production of most domestic ranchers. In any event, this is an increase of 54 cents per pelt amounting to only 3½ percent. I cannot share the optimism of some that the mink market is on its way back. Historically, when prices plummet as they have three times in the mink industry since 1961, a plateau has been established and the prices do not recover.

I do hope this committee will do its utmost to keep these self-reliant ranchers safe from unrestricted imports.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ruppe, thank you, for sharing your views with us. Are there any questions?

Mr. RUPPE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Statements of Mr. Hathaway and Mr. McClory referred to follow.)

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM D. HATHAWAY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF MAINE

Mr. Chairman and members of this Committee, as a representative of one of the major shoe manufacturing states in the Nation, I have been kept well-informed by my friends involved in all capacities of the shoe industry of the alarming, steady increase in shoe imports plus the downward trend in shoe exports which threaten the future of many workers, of numerous manufacturers, and the economy of several States. I have watched the continuing increase of