

We have already seen the damaging effect of, the below cost of production returns, for the 1966 crop of mink pelts, and with similar poor returns for the 1967 crop, sold in 1968, it is quite evident that more of our ranchers will be going out of business at pelting time in the fall of this year.

In our state of Wisconsin, 300 ranchers have gone out of business in the last two years, almost all, because of their inability to stay in business with the below cost of production returns for their pelts.

These 300 ranchers represent 30% of the 1000 producers operating in Wisconsin two years ago. In 1965 ranchers in the state raised 2,300,000 pelts bringing a gross return of \$46,000,000. Based on the reduced number of producers, and also, by a survey conducted by the National Board of Fur Farm Organizations, indications are that production of mink pelts in Wisconsin in 1968 will be approximately 1,600,000, or a reduction of 30%, and at the present price level will have a gross revenue of \$23,400,000, approximately 50% less dollar-wise, than that of the 1965 crop. With the reduction of approximately \$23,000,000, in pelt income to the Wisconsin ranchers, the tax revenue of the state will be adversely affected. Labor requirements will be reduced by 30% or \$3,180,000 will not find its way into the labor market. In 1965 the mink producers paid out in excess of \$20,000,000 for feed, which included \$3,600,000 for cereal and dry ingredients, \$3,600,000 for fish and marine by-products, \$3,000,000 for poultry by-products, \$4,400,000 for meat scrap and trimming and \$5,400,000 for liver and other fortification. Many of these products are produced in our state and in line with the 30% reduction in ranch requirements, it will mean reduction of monies paid by ranchers to suppliers of feed in excess of \$6,000,000. The reduced dollar volume received for pelts, the reduced monies paid for labor, and reduced monies paid for feed result in a diminishing cash flow in our state of approximately \$30,000,000. This cannot help but have a negative influence on the economy of the State.

I believe that unless the mink farming industry receives some help in the form of import protection, it will be a diminishing industry.

I feel that bill H.R. 6694 and the many similar bills now pending, would give our fur industry some needs protection while allowing foreign producers to have a fair share of our United States Market.

In closing I ask that you give serious consideration to the passage of legislation, alleviating the despairing conditions that now exist in the mink industry.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, I wish to thank you for affording me this opportunity to plead our case before you.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD E. WESTWOOD, PRESIDENT, EMBA MINK
BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, my name is Richard E. Westwood and I live at West Jordan, Utah, where I operate a 1,600 female mink ranch. I speak to you today as President of the Emba Mink Breeders Association. Emba is a pelt marketing co-operative. It markets for its members approximately two-thirds of all the mink raised in the United States. Since its function is the marketing and promotion of mutation mink, it represents approximately 90 per cent of the domestic production of mutation pelts. The one-third of the U.S. crop not sold through Emba is either dark mink which are sold through the Great Lakes Mink Association or those classed as independents which amount to about 10 per cent.

DECLINE IN MEMBERSHIP

Because of economic conditions in our industry, the EMBA Mink Breeders Association membership has dropped from a peak of 5,623 in 1958 to a low of 3,460 at the beginning of this year. A number of these 3,460 ranchers quit business last fall, but we still carry them on our membership lists because we have not completed the selling of their last crop of pelts. A large percentage of those who quit the business did so because they could not survive financially. The rate of drop-out was greatly accelerated in 1967 because of the disastrous pelt prices. A survey by the National Board of Fur Farm Organizations in February discloses that 680 ranchers quit business last fall. Most of these ranchers were members of EMBA, so our active membership at this time is in the neighborhood of 2,800.