

As can be seen from these figures there has been a consistent pattern of shipping the cheapest pelts to the United States and selling their better quality pelts in their primary markets. You can imagine when a mink coat requires about 60 pelts what a saving of \$5.00 per pelt can mean in the final price of the garment, but one should also take into consideration the quality of the garment that can be purchased at such low prices.

I understand that Miss Furness appeared before the Committee and urged freer trade on the theory this would give the consumers protection against higher prices and more selectivity for quality products. I can assure her that just taking the figures above, the American man who buys a Scandinavian mink for his wife is not getting a bargain. The figures show that it is a cheaper quality product than the Italian or French husband can buy, yet it is all called mink. I don't think there is any protection provided the American consumer and, in fact, I think the American consumer is being deluded into thinking he is getting a quality product. When the disappointment sets in because it is not a quality product, the mink image suffers no matter the source.

There is another factor which I would like to touch on concerning these cheap priced and cheap quality mink. As most of you know, mink generally are sold at auctions, both in the Scandinavian countries and in the United States. Because mink are quota and duty free, American dealers and brokers in pelts can go to the foreign auctions and buy the cheap quality pelts and bring them into the United States and make garments or use the pelts for trim. With this steady and uncontrolled flow of the cheaper pelts into the United States, naturally the auction prices of American mink go down. The American rancher with a quality product just can't compete and as others have indicated the American producer is being driven from the ranch because he is trying to sell a high quality product against a low quality product of the same name at the same price. If, however, the Scandinavians were sending their better quality mink into the United States, the American Rancher could compete.

As you know, a number of bills have been introduced to give at least a bit of protection to the domestic mink rancher. The bills provide that the first 40 per cent of estimated domestic consumption could come in duty free and there would be a 50 per cent ad valorem added to any balance. Instead of dumping all or nearly all of their cheap mink on the American market, the Scandinavians would have to spread their low quality product among all of their customers whether they be in Italy, France, West Germany or Switzerland. Thus, there would be less of the lower quality mink on the American market and garment manufacturers and others who utilize mink would have to turn to American produced ranch mink. This in turn would improve domestic prices. It would seem to me that the American buyers at Scandinavian auctions would buy the better quality mink to bring them in duty free and if there was an apparent need for the cheaper mink they would come in, but with the 50 per cent ad valorem. In other words, I would think they would rather pay the ad valorem on the cheaper goods than on the more expensive goods.

According to the recent Tariff Commission investigation, imports have taken over 50 percent of the domestic consumption. As I have pointed out, it is the cheaper mink which comes into this country. Since it is obvious that all mink are not of the same quality I think it is only fair to the American consumer to keep the quality as even as possible so that the consumer will be getting a quality product when she gets a mink garment.

Thank you.

Mr. LOVRE. In addition I would like to have introduced two letters, one from the Hudson's Bay Co., the other from the New York Auction Co., addressed to Mr. Westwood which give the prices, the number of pelts and the average selling prices from December 1, 1966 to 1967, and then the comparable data for December 1, 1967 to 1968, and that is contained in both letters.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection that material will also appear in the record.

(The letters referred to follow:)