

can, I am sure, sell 50 percent more mink in the market than are being produced today but the prices would be at prices far below our cost of production so in order to maintain this supply they would have to be all produced somewhere else.

Mr. GILBERT. What would the cost of a mink coat come to where the mink was imported mink as opposed to the cost of a mink that was made out of domestic skins?

Mr. WESTWOOD. I can only talk in generalities. I spent some time in Europe and the best figures that I could get on cost of production of a mink pelt in Europe was about \$10.

In the United States I have heard various figures. I know what it costs some of my neighbors to produce a pelt and I know that some produce for less than others. It depends on many things, but on my own ranch it costs me \$17 per pelt to produce a pelt and I feel that I have a good conservative operation. I know that there are some ranchers who can produce for \$15 but I don't know of anybody in the United States than can produce a pelt for \$10 when they figure all of the costs.

Mr. GILBERT. You say \$17 a pelt?

Mr. WESTWOOD. Yes; \$17 a pelt is what it costs me to produce a pelt on my own ranch.

Mr. GILBERT. And you say now that it is selling for around \$15 on the market?

Mr. WESTWOOD. The average price last year was about \$14 a pelt.

Mr. GILBERT. \$14.

Mr. WESTWOOD. Yes.

Mr. GILBERT. So I take it from your statement you are losing \$3 per pelt.

Mr. WESTWOOD. I didn't say that I was losing \$3 per pelt. My cost of production is \$17 per pelt. The cost that I have been fortunate enough to get for my own pelt is over \$17 a pelt.

Mr. GILBERT. So you get over \$17?

Mr. WESTWOOD. Yes, but we are talking in averages now. If the national average price is \$14 per pelt some ranchers get more than that. You have to have a balancing number who get less than \$14 when you figure it as a gross price and figure the cost of selling and shipping and insurance. That is below the cost of production of anybody that I know of so the average rancher is having to sell below cost of production, not every rancher, but the average rancher. Everybody's pelts are figured in the average.

Mr. GILBERT. I just want to understand. You made a statement here that you are selling pelts at \$14 per pelt on the market and it is costing you \$17 but you say you are still making money because you sell your pelts for a higher price than the average on the market?

Mr. WESTWOOD. Yes.

Mr. GILBERT. Have you made a cost estimate on these other ranchers that you say are producing mink? Are they \$17 a pelt or are they less?

Mr. WESTWOOD. I think that they are less but I don't have anything to substantiate the exact figure. I think that the national average would probably be between \$15 and \$16. I think that my cost may be slightly higher than the average but I don't have—

Mr. GILBERT. I take it that the industry really isn't losing money as you seem to indicate in your statement here.