

STATEMENT OF EUGENE DREISIN, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN FUR MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION, INC.; ACCOMPANIED BY B. H. HESSEL, MEMBER, FOREIGN TRADE COMMITTEE, AND JAMES R. SHARP, COUNSEL

Mr. DREISIN. My name is Eugene Dreisin. I am president of the American Fur Merchants' Association, Inc., of New York, the largest association of fur brokers and dealers in the United States. I am also president of British-American Brokers, Inc., and represent U.S. and foreign fur companies as a broker. I am accompanied by Mr. B. H. Hessel, a member of our Foreign Trade Committee, and Mr. James R. Sharp, counsel for our association.

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate having you gentlemen with us and you are recognized, sir. If you omit any part of your statement do so with the knowledge that the entire statement will be in the record.

Mr. DREISIN. Thank you very much. I and my association are opposed to the various bills referred to this committee which would impose an import quota on mink furskins. We are also opposed to H.R. 16936, the Herlong bill. There are basic reasons for our opposition.

I have filed our brief and request that it be included in the record. I would like to summarize it for you.

There are basic reasons for our position on these bills or our opposition to these bills.

First. The domestic mink ranching industry is not an isolated industry but a part of the world fur producing industry.

The domestic mink ranchers would induce this committee to believe that they are an industry separate to themselves. They are mistaken. There can be no question but that they are part and parcel of the whole world fur industry and are affected by developments within that industry. I say this advisedly.

The United States has always been a large importer of furs, but the types of furs imported frequently have changed according to fashion and styling demands. Total fur imports are \$6 million less today than they were in 1949, and \$5 million less than they were in 1959. In dollars, fur imports were \$109 million in 1949—\$108 million in 1959—and \$103 million in 1967.

Thus fur manufacturers in this country today are using about the same amount of imported furs dollarwise as they were 20 years ago. This may surprise you, but it is a fact. It is clearly demonstrated in appendix A to our brief.

What has happened is not an increase in imports of furs over the last 20 years—but instead, due to fashion trends and the development of new furs and dressing techniques—a shift has been made from one fur to another.

Changes in fashion and in the likes and dislikes of women have taken place repeatedly and relatively rapidly. Up to 1949 the U.S. demand for furs was concentrated on Persian lamb, squirrel, muskrat, nutria, rabbit, raccon and foxes.

Today, due to fashion demand 80 percent of the fur market has shifted to mink. And the import picture simply reflects this trend. Our imports in the last 20 years of Persian lambs, muskrats, ermine, martens, squirrels, et cetera, have declined by about 50 percent and in the case of some furs to zero. Their place has been taken by mink.