

We find a similar situation in our fur exports. Raccoon and muskrat production in the United States to give you an example, which a few years ago was largely domestically consumed, is now almost entirely shipped abroad to countries where these items have remained in fashion.

Not too long ago we had a substantial U.S. production of silver foxes. Today it is negligible, and there is no demand for silver foxes in the U.S. market. What has happened to Persian lamb, squirrel, muskrat, nutria, rabbit, raccoon, and silver fox? What has happened is mink.

As is demonstrated by the statistics of appendix B of our brief, mink has largely taken over the fur market here, and now a similar shift is taking place in Europe. Mink has developed into not one fur—but into many furs of different color phases, sizes, and qualities. It is the fur which has greater versatility than any of the others produced in this country.

Now your wives and mine, like Mrs. Griffiths of this committee, can find in the mink market in the United States any style, size and color they wish to select. This fur called mink is more adaptable to varieties of styling than any of the fur previously produced or imported from abroad. From short coats to long coats—Twiggy styles to full styles—conservative colors to high-style colors—short garments to long garments—mink runs the gamut.

Another important fact is as the domestic demand for imported furs remained stable, exports of fur from the United States to other countries increased well over 100 percent, from 26 million in 1949 to 65 million in 1967. See appendix A of our brief.

The point I would like to emphasize is that the fur market is a shifting market, shifting with fashion trends and economic conditions from one fur to the other with relative rapidity.

Yet, as shown by appendix C, of our brief, the ratio of U.S. exports of all furs to net U.S. imports of furs has vastly improved from 25.3 percent in 1950 to 68.54 percent in 1967. The shift to mink displaced practically all other furs and the domestic producers of other furs had to go out of business or shift to mink or sell their products for export.

Now—with these facts at hand, let us see if we can understand why it is that some domestic mink producers have a problem. Some have had one—and they have blamed it on imports. The real question here is whether imports are at the bottom of the problem, or whether the problem is, in fact, attributable to other causes.

This brings me to the second point, the domestic mink ranchers' problem.

The problems of the domestic mink ranchers are based on factors largely or wholly unrelated to imports.

Mink is a luxury commodity which is purchasable normally only out of disposable income. That is what people have left over after they have bought the necessities of life. This is not true of mink but of all furs. The dip in prices experienced by the domestic mink ranchers in the 1966–67 selling season was what led them to ask Congress for congressional action to limit imports but this price decline was not unusual in mink in general and not to mink sold by the domestic ranchers.