coats to long coats—Twiggy styles to full styles—conservative colors to high-style colors—short garments to long garments—mink runs the gamut.

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.

As the aggregate number of imported furs remained stable, *exports* of all furs from the U.S. to other countries increased well over 100%—from $26 million in 1949 to $65 million in 1967.

The point I would like to emphasize is that the fur market is a shifting market, shifting from fashion trends from one fur to the other with relative rapidity, yet as shown by Appendix C attached, the ratio of U.S. exports of all furs to national U.S. imports of furs has vastly improved from 25.3% in 1950 to 68.54% in 1967.

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.

THE DOMESTIC MINK RANCHERS' PROBLEM

Let me take up what *I* think some of the domestic ranchers' major problems are:

1. *Mink Is A Luxury Purchasable Out Of Disposable Income.*—Mink is a commodity which is purchasable normally only out of disposable income. Disposable income is the money people have left over after they have bought the necessities of life. Let's not kid ourselves—all furs are luxuries in a way—and mink particularly is so, for it is higher priced than most other furs. Silver foxes were at one time in demand. Now they are out of fashion here and nobody wants them. Muskrat was at one time a highly acceptable product in the U.S. Now few here want it and it is largely exported..

Changes and rumors of changes in economic conditions here and abroad have an immediate effect upon the demand for mink, as they do for other furs. The extremely unusual price decline in the 1966–67 market season for mink was matched by the same pattern that year *in all furs.* That dip in prices was what originally led to the demand for Congressional action. But it was not just the domestic mink ranchers who experienced a price decline. A price decline in approximately equal percentage occurred in the European mink markets (see Figure 6, p. 57, Tariff Commission Report). And it occurred on a world wide basis with respect to all furs, including, for instance, Alaska seal skins which are only found in the United States and hence not subject to import competition for there are no imports of that fur.

In 1967 total imports of mink skins declined by 400,000, or approximately 8% under imports for the prior year, but the price decline in the U.S. was approximately equal to that experienced abroad. The cause was in the Tariff Commission's language "a retardation in the economic growth of the U.S. and the major mink consuming countries in Europe." This should make it clear that the demand for a luxury product like mink cannot be changed by legislation. Mink is one of many furs traded in the international market . . . a fact of life which the domestic ranchers have not yet been willing to acknowledge. If disposable income in this country and in other major mink consuming countries increases . . . the demand for all furs increases. Styles notwithstanding, if the economic situation in major world mink markets turns sour, the demand for mink and all other furs deteriorates. It is important, in my opinion, as a man who has been engaged in the fur business for many years—that the mink ranchers in this country attempt to acquaint themselves with the facts of the fur market. It is international in character. It always has been and it will always remain so.

There are other facts of life in the fur industry which the domestic mink ranchers have been unwilling to face up to—facts which have controlled their fate—facts which have led to occasional deterioration of the prices they receive for their skins.

2. *U.S. Ranchers Generally Raise Better Class Mink—The Imports Largely Consist of Commercial Mink.*—According to the recent Tariff Commission Report, the American rancher raised 27% of the world production in 1966—while the American market consumed 45% of world production. In recent years imports supplied from 50% to 54% of domestic consumption. This is a large segment indeed. But the American producers have specialized in and exerted their efforts largely toward the production of high quality minks, while the ranchers abroad