by the ranchers to Members of Congress that as imports rose, domestic prices fell, and as a consequence, large numbers of U.S. mink ranchers have been forced out of business.

The U.S. Tariff Commission, in an exhaustive 6-month study, reported to the President on April 9, 1968. It did not find facts supporting the claims of the domestic ranchers. I have copies of that report here for any member of the committee who may not have received one.

One important fact concerning the nature of this industry should be noted first. The Commission found that while the total number of ranches has decreased from the 6,200 level reported in its 1959 escape clause report to about 3,300 presently, only 50 percent or 1,650 of the remaining 3,300 are commercial producers. This amounts to an increase of 45 percent over the number of commercial ranchers in business in 1959. The Commission found that these 1,650 commercial producers raise 88 percent of the total U.S. ranch mink production, and that the remaining 1,650 of the ranchers are "backyard" or "small" noncommercial producers or, as Mr. Henderson described them, moonlighters, generating only 12 percent of total U.S. production.

It reported—

* * * successful mink farming requires managing and marketing enterprise, full time labor input, and substantial capital investment. Hence the number of small scale ranchers and so-called backyard operators has decreased.

The Tariff Commission concluded that the decline in small mink ranchers was "consistent with a trend prevailing in other farm enterprises."

More importantly, however, it noted that "aggregate operations of those remaining have expanded" as, it reported, had most other farm enterprises over the past few years. Thus the "drop out" of small ranchers was not in any manner attributed to imports.

Let me summarize other high points of the Tariff Commission's findings:

1. *Price declines were worldwide and domestic declines were not attributable to imports.*—It did not attribute the 1966–67 price declines to imports. Instead, such declines were attributed primarily to a deterioration of economic conditions in the major mink-consuming countries in Europe. The Commission pointed out that mink, a luxury product—

* * * is particularly susceptible to changes in economic conditions; even small changes in general economic conditions contribute to wide swings in demand and price of mink.

Other factors, but not imports, were contributory. It thus acknowledged the importance of U.S. and world economic conditions and frequent changes in style as the determining factors of the shifting demand in the mink industry. The Commission noted that the bulk of U.S. imports are from Canada and Scandinavia, that such imports are supplemental to U.S. production, and that they tend to expand consumption of finished garments in the United States rather than depress domestic sales of mink skins.

2. *Noncommercial producers have other major sources of income.*—The Commission confirmed that the half of the U.S. ranchers who are small, or "backyard" noncommercial producers, derive their major income from sources other than mink.