of 1953–57, such imports averaged 53 per cent. After Tariff Commission hearings in 1959 denied import relief to United States mink ranchers, there was a sharp rise in the Scandinavian crop of mink pelts, corresponding with a sharp decline in the market in 1961. These lower levels have prevailed ever since and there has been a steady decline in the number of mink ranches in Utah and the United States. With the still lower levels caused by the second sharp break in 1967 and the fear these new levels would establish a new plateau below the cost of production, more ranchers pelted out. There are only 3300 ranches left in the United States against 17,000 in Scandinavia, and the annual rate of increase in production in the United States through 1966 (before the price break) was only 8 per cent compared to 20 per cent in the Scandinavian countries.

Import controls such as those prepared in H.R. 6694 seek to control the imports of mink pelts while still sharing a substantial part of our market with our foreign friends on a duty-free basis.

Mink are native only to North America, and the ranching of these animals originated here. Mink prices are subject to the law of supply and demand. In order to create and maintain a demand for its members' pelts, Emba and other U.S. marketing associations have spent millions of dollars on advertising, promotion, and public relations. Again this year, Emba's budget is over one million dollars. The bulk of this is spent on advertising to reinforce the prestige image of mink—to retain mink as high fashion.

Financing of Emba's program is accomplished by assessment of a percentage of the gross sales of a member's pelts. When prices are high, this assessment is no burden to the rancher. When prices are as low as they have been this season and last, then the assssment percentage must be increased in order to maintain sufficient promotion funds to keep mink fashionable and the market for pelts buoyant. When the increased assessment is added to fixed selling costs, then the cost burden becomes more and more difficult for the rancher to bear.

As the volume of production shrinks, the mink association is faced with the problem of how to maintain adequate advertising and promotion funds. If the selling deduction is again raised, members may be forced out of business at a faster rate. If the deduction is not raised, then the funds available may not be sufficient to keep mink fashionable, to ensure that there is a market for the pelts. The Emba association does not think its members can stand an increase in selling costs.

Mink association advertising and promotion, both here and abroad, over the past twenty-five years has created a demand for all mink, including the cheaper foreign pelts. The leap-frogging increase of foreign production calculated to take advantage of the demand has resulted in a supply in the market which exceeds profitable demand, insofar as the U.S. rancher is concerned. This amounts to a free ride on Emba association advertising when forign pelts are sold in the U.S.

H.R. 6694 and the many similar bills pending before this committee seek to control the imports of mink pelts while still sharing a substantial part of the market with our foreign friends. Our Utah ranchers think these bills are fair, and they support the position of the National Board of Fur Farm organizations in his matter. I ask that you give immediate and favorable consideration to these bills.

Import controls such as proposed in H.R. 6694 would be fair to all, would help correct our nation's balance of payments problems, and would help save this segment of our self-reliant agricultural industry—Mink Farming.

Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the committee, on behalf of Utah mink ranchers and the Domestic Mink Farming industry, I wish to thank you for this opportunity of bringing our problems to you.

I earnestly request that you give quick and favorable attention to the bills proposing import controls on mink pelts in order to save the mink industry.

Thank you.

Statement of Hon. George V. Hansen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Idaho

Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to be here today to testify in behalf of my bill, H.R. 10938 and the many similar bills which have been introduced to provide some degree of relief from imports for domestic mink ranchers. I introduced this bill only after much consideration because I know the general trend is toward freer and freer trade, despite its effects on domestic industries. I felt that the mink problem was special and should be given special consideration.