

Let me deal briefly with the economic aspects of the fur trade for Canadians. The fur industry is worth approximately \$600 million annually. There is a spin-off of, roughly speaking, \$200 million in allied industries like transportation. For the last two to three years, Canadian fur exports totalled approximately \$350 million annually, much of that going to the European market.

To put those figures into perspective, are we talking about six companies earning \$100 million per year? Are we talking about 12 companies earning \$50 million per year? No, we are talking about 105,000 Canadians who earn all or part of their incomes from the fur industry. We are talking about individuals who may earn \$1,000, \$5,000 or \$10,000 per year, people who may have the opportunity to purchase a skidoo or a canoe. More important, we are talking about individuals who may be able to afford to put bread on their tables.

We are talking about aboriginal people. Fifty thousand of the 105,000 Canadians involved in trapping are aboriginal people. More than that, 80 per cent of the retail fur sales in Canada are made through privately owned family run one store businesses. We are talking about 105,000 Canadians who collectively do not want to be part of the welfare system.

Above and beyond the economics of this issue, and much more important, are the social and cultural factors involved with native people and northern communities. As Hon. Members know, in December of 1986, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development presented the House with a report entitled *The Fur Issue*. The committee heard from many Canadians who depend directly upon the fur trade. At the time that report was prepared we had received 43 written reports and heard 33 witnesses. Among those who appeared were representatives of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Department of External Affairs, the Assembly of First Nations, the Department of the Environment, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Aboriginal Trappers Federation of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Council for Yukon Indians, the Government of the Yukon Territory, the Ross River Indian Band, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, and the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee.

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To native people trapping involves more than simply trying to earn cash income. It implies a unique social, spiritual, and cultural relationship with the land and its resources. In northern communities trapping and trade are the encompassing activities which hold the people together, creating a bond of belonging and providing all of the inhabitants with a purpose. These comments were echoed time and again in our committee hearings.

Page 10 of our report, under Social and Cultural Importance of Trapping, reads:

Hunting and trapping are not "jobs" for Inuit—

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We in the North live the life of subsistence hunters and trappers. Our families contribute to all phases of getting ready for hunting and preparing of skins. Our wives, our children, and our relatives share in the work and the rewards. . . . We as Inuit have always harvested animals as a way of life. In the North the animals, man and nature lived in a harmony that was both cruel and fair to all. At times men and animals starved, and at other times there was plenty. Nature ensured the balance; and the Inuit were an integral part of his life. We have survived for centuries in this area of the country.

We heard from the manager of the Old Crow Indian Band. He said:

Oh, it would deprive us of our identity, for sure. We still have not had the chance to adapt to any other society or any other way of living. That is where we are now at. We are slowly adapting so that we can create our economy, or create a structure if we have a strong economy. Trapping is a way of life for a lot of people in our community—

May I remind my colleagues in the House that this is not the first time we have been charged with defending our fur industry. Both in 1979 and in 1982 we considered the serious threat and implications of the anti-fur campaign with respect to the seal hunt. At that time the European community banned imports of seal pup pelts as a reaction to a lobbying campaign that was based on an emotional appeal, one which was very shallow in facts. Through an effective use of the media and through sheer sensationalism the animal rights movement was successful. The devastation that was felt by the collapse of our industry, especially in the Maritimes, is well recorded.

Sealing added \$19.4 million to the economy of the Northwest Territories in 1981 but this fell to \$9.9 million in 1983-84. After the European Economic Community ban on "whitecoat" imports was instituted in February, 1983, the market for pelts of mature seals collapsed as well. In 18 of 20 Inuit communities in the Northwest Territories the annual revenue from the sale of sealskin pelts dropped by approximately 60 per cent. The community of Broughton Island saw its collective income fall from a total of \$92,099 in 1981-82 to \$13,504 in 1983-84.

Towns have been economically ruined, families have had to move or have been torn apart, and an entire way of life was altered because we were unable to put an effective case forward for our seal hunt. The loss of the seal hunt and what it meant for thousands of Canadians can still be seen today; family break-ups, bankruptcies, needless suicides, alcoholism, the loss of an individual's self-worth, dignity, and sense of belonging. These tragedies we cannot allow to recur.

The impact of the animal rights campaigns and the anti-fur campaigns, particularly those in Europe, have been felt by many Canadians. Our Government, in partnership with the Canadian Fur Institute and other representatives of the industry, has taken steps to address their concerns.

In the past decade we have become increasingly active in the conservation and management of our wildlife, the development of the humane trap testing and design, trapper education, and the education of the public on the trapping advancements which have been made in Canada.

However, it is evident from the ever-increasing and constant pressure being applied by the animal rights groups and anti-fur