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Humane Information Services

Incorporated

A NON-PROFIT SOCIETY FURNISHING INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS
FOR USE IN PROGRAMS FOR THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

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Answers to Readers' Questions and Comments

Laboratory Legislation

We continue to receive inquiries about the laboratory animal bills, H.R. 13168 and S. 2481, now awaiting action by the Congress. We also have been asked repeatedly how individual humanitarian can most effectively register their desires about this legislation, when they already have written to many members of Congress and the White House.

We have been in close touch with progress of these bills through the administrative channels where such bills are considered before being sent back to Congress with a recommendation for action. The work of following these bills and trying to see that they are not lost in the shuffle has been done by individual humanitarians, not representatives of humane societies, most of which are tax-exempt organizations and hence prohibited from influencing legislation. We understand that the Rogers bill now is in the Budget Bureau, which the bill's sponsors hope will soon transmit it to the Congressional committees with a recommendation for passage. Since the Budget Bureau is an arm of the executive end of the government, reporting directly to the President, it is highly probable that the President will have a great deal to say about any action to be taken by the Budget Bureau, which in turn will greatly influence Congress. No doubt the President now is being importuned by influential opponents of the legislation to kill it.

Therefore, any humanitarian wishing to express his wishes with respect to this legislation can do so most effectively at this juncture by writing to The President of the United States, The White House, Washington, D. C. 20500, asking that the bills be approved by the Administration and sent as soon as possible to the appropriate committees of Congress with a recommendation for passage. Or, if you wish to oppose these bills, ask that the recommendation be against passage. That is a decision for your own conscience. Even if you have written before, no doubt the President would be glad to get your opinion at this stage of developments.

How You Can Help

Many readers say they feel frustrated because they can't do more to help eliminate animal suffering: "We have written the suggested letters, and we contribute as much as we can, but we would like to do more." But many say that they are unable to do interviewing or active outdoor work.

Well, there is something which all of you can do -- something very important. And that is to read each of our reports carefully -- not just skim through them -- and then write to us, giving your reactions to the particular humane program discussed in the report. Each issue we will have a new program, or an important new phase of some previously presented program.

For example, the major feature of this Report No. 4 is an analysis of the humane problems presented by the fur trade. We have some very promising plans for dealing with these problems. But it will be impossible to make an intelligent choice among alternative programs, or to put any of them into effect, without first knowing how humanitarians will react to certain proposals. Just as it is useless to try to obtain laboratory animal legislation which the majority of humanitarians will not accept, so it is a waste of time to attempt to deal with the cruelties of the fur trade by methods which, although potentially effective, would be misinterpreted and not supported by humanitarians.

So, we ask you to take seriously these requests for comments on various matters discussed in our reports, and to write us as often as you feel able, giving your views frankly even if you do not agree with our proposals. In so doing, you can participate actively and helpfully in these

highly important national programs, which in the past have seemed so big and so distant as to be beyond an individual humanitarian's capacity to influence.

As we have said before, individual replies to your letters usually are not feasible. Our volume of mail already is comparable with that of other large national societies which have far greater financial support and more elaborate facilities for handling correspondence. But you can be assured that your letters are not opened and read by some disinterested mail clerk. All letters we receive are read carefully by one of our principal officers, and we really are influenced by what you say in these letters.

The Rat Poison Program

In our last Report, No. 3, we discussed the tremendous humane problem arising from the use of cruel poisons in rat eradication programs. We presented a detailed outline of an action program, which if carried out would practically eliminate the use of objectionable poisons. We asked for your comments on this program, and to let us know if you would actively participate in carrying it out, either as an individual or through your local humane society.

Your response was very gratifying in volume of comments, but disappointing with respect to the number of those offering active assistance. This was especially true of other humane societies, a key factor in our over-all plan. Only a very few local societies offered to participate.

This response, and the many intelligent comments on the proposed program, have been very useful. They have helped greatly to indicate to us which of several alternative approaches to the problem are best.

These reactions indicated that some "field trials" will be necessary before attempting to inaugurate a full program. This will be done by working with the individual humanitarians and the few local societies who offered to help. As soon as other work permits and additional materials can be prepared, we will get in touch with them.

The net result of all this is that you have reacted with sufficient approval to cause us to put the humane rat poison program on our list of continuing action programs, but to reject an immediate crash program directly related to the recent 40 million dollar appropriation by Congress.

Your letters did show an amazing amount of interest in applying humane methods even in killing rats. Only a few correspondents expressed disapproval. One lady resented our statement about over-emphasis on dogs and cats in humane activities, even going so far as to disapprove of doing much for cats. Only dogs, in her view, deserve much attention. Well, that is one way of looking at it. Another writer asked to be removed from the mailing list, being disgusted with our concern over rats.

But most of those who wrote expressed warm approval. And many were touched by the story of Baby Rat. One lady thought this was uselessly sentimental, but many others said that the story served to bring home to them the fact that all animals are God's creatures, and become objectionable only when contaminated by man's filth and inhumanity. One lady thinks that undesirable attitudes toward animals stem in considerable part from intense fear of certain animals such as rats and snakes, developed during childhood, which carries over in adult life in the form of aggressive attitudes toward animals in general. She said, "When I was a child I had pet white rats so I grew up without fear and became a sort of female Albert Schweitzer in my reverence for life." She considers white rats to be ideal pets for children, helping to develop good character traits



FURS — A Major Humane Problem

If the great humane problems of the world were to be listed in order of importance, based on the number of animals and the average amount of suffering per animal involved, the fur trade would rank fourth or fifth.

There are no precise data on the annual production of fur skins or pelts in either the United States or the world. Estimates by various "authorities", even of specific parts of the industry, differ greatly. By piecing together the figures which are available, Humane Information Services estimates that 15 to 20 million fur animals are utilized annually by the fur trade of the Western Nations. This does not include species of very minor importance, nor many millions of skins which largely are a by-product of the production of meat. Estimates given in some publications issued in the 1950's are much higher than the figure mentioned, but we believe that they do not reflect changes in both demand and supply conditions in recent years. It is evident that some of these estimates were exaggerated to begin with.

Some further idea of the vastness of the world trade in furs is given by the following data for the United States. In this country alone there are between 1,500 and 2,000 manufacturing establishments devoted to the production of fur garments. They employ about 8,000 people in the actual production operations, involving about 15 million man-hours, with an annual payroll approaching 60 million dollars. The annual value of shipments from these factories, at wholesale prices, in 1963 was 331 million dollars. The value of raw, undressed fur skins imported was 117 million dollars. In a single year, 1964, the United States Government collected 30 million dollars in retail excise taxes on furs. It requires little imagination to think of the numbers of skins of individual fur-bearing animals required to keep such an industry in operation, and of the vast amount of suffering undergone by those millions of animals.

Another way to visualize the enormity of the fur trade is to think of the millions of women in the world who own fur garments. Consider the fact that it requires, for example, the skins of 60 to 90 mink to make a coat, and up to 40 skins for a mere stole. Think of the suffering undergone to provide for the vanity and comfort of some thoughtless woman.

If we really are going to accomplish anything in eliminating the major cruelties of the fur trade, it will be necessary to: (1) do a little homework in studying pertinent conditions existing in the fur trade; (2) carefully delineate the most important humane problems involved; (3) work out practical, effective programs to deal with these problems. Understanding of the conditions described in the following pages is a prerequisite for planning or participating intelligently in any effective action program.

SOURCES OF FUR SKINS

The different animals used in the fur trade represent about 80 varieties of furs. In all, more than 80 countries located on all six continents contribute to the world supply of fur pelts. The North American continent alone produces about 40 types of indigenous furs, the most important of which are mink, muskrat, beaver, raccoon, skunk and opossum. Northern and Central Europe and Siberia supply badger, beaver, ermine, fitch, fox, hare, lynx, marmot, mink, muskrat, nutria, otter, sable, squirrel, wolf, goat and moleskin. Karakul sheep and similar breeds raised in Russia, Near East countries, and South Africa yield black Persian lamb skins and similar types.

Perhaps half of the world's production of seal skins comes from the Pribilof Islands about 300 miles west of Alaska, the remainder being taken in Canadian and other waters. Formerly uncontrolled slaughter reduced the seal herds almost to extinction, but conservation measures adopted in 1911 have resulted since in a build-up to over 1,500,000 head, yielding about 60,000 skins annually, which are a monopoly of the United States Government. The seal represents a very minor part (probably less than one percent) of the fur trade.

There are four general sources of fur skins and pelts: (1) the domestic production of fur animals on farms, generally designated by the misnomer "fur ranching"; (2) the trapping of wild animals; (3) the hunting of large land animals and seals with guns and clubs; (4) the utilization of the skins of domestic animals mostly raised for wool or human or animal food, such as sheep, rabbits and ponies. Since the conditions affecting the numbers of such food animals produced and slaughtered, and the welfare of those animals, are related only indirectly to the fur trade, they are not discussed in this report.

RANCH PRODUCTION OF MINK*

One authority claims that about half of all fur skins entering the commercial trade now are raised on farms or so-called "ranches". Mink are said to represent about three-fourths of all fur skins used in recent years, and about three-fourths of mink are raised on "farms". These estimates probably are on the high side for ranch-raised mink, but in any event the latter dominate the fur trade, and will continue to grow in both absolute and relative importance. Silver fox and chinchilla also are raised in captivity to some extent.

Commercial production of mink on farms has expanded rapidly since World War II. In 1938 there were four times as many skins from wild mink as from ranch mink; by 1948, there were ten times as many skins from ranch mink as from wild mink. Ranch production in the United States increased from 1.5 million in 1948 to 5 million in 1959, and since then has expanded even more. The 5 million ranch-produced mink compare with about 400,000 wild mink trapped in 1959, and about 2.5 million imported skins. Thus, ranch production of mink in the United States alone now represents possibly a third of total fur skins raised, trapped or killed in the Western world.

Commercial quantities of ranch mink skins are produced only in the United States, Canada and Northern Europe. In the United States, mink are raised mostly in the northern and mid-western states where the cool climate is suitable and there is relatively easy access to supplies of fish and packing house by-products for use as feed. The leading mink-producing states are Wisconsin, which produces about one-third of the United States' output, and Minnesota, Washington, Utah, Illinois, Michigan and New York, which together account for about another one-third. The remaining production is scattered among other states, particularly Oregon, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. Like all of the other facts and statistics given in this report, this distribution has significance with respect to possible programs for promoting the humane treatment of fur animals.

In the early days it was thought that mink must be raised under conditions as close as possible to those existing in nature, including access to streams or ponds of water. The mink lived under natural conditions in a fenced-in range but were supplied supplemental food and nests. The animals still had to be trapped. This system worked very satisfactorily, except for the fact that the frequent contacts among animals prevented controlled breeding, and this and lack of other controls caused pelt quality to suffer. As a result the present-day "pen" plan evolved, which keeps each animal in a separate cage. This is a very intensive system of "farming" which requires substantial capital, and is not merely a supplement to other farm operations.

From the standpoint of the humanitarian there are two most important aspects of ranch production of mink: (1) housing, care, handling and feeding; (2) killing.

Housing and Care

Because mink are valuable, and the number of mink produced from a given number of breeding animals and the quality of the pelts depend to a considerable extent upon proper nutrition and maintenance of health, commercial mink ranches generally can be counted upon to give their animals plenty of feed and good care. However, mink have never lost their wild animal characteristics through generations in captivity. A principal impediment to domesticating other fur-bearing animals is their failure to breed in captivity. In this respect mink offer very little trouble, but even after generations under captivity they remain savage and very difficult to handle. This, plus the natural desire of ranchers to keep their equipment cost as low as possible, results in the use of cages which to a humanitarian would appear much too small.

There are two types of pens used: (1) breeder pens, in which the mink are born and raised on the mother's milk until several weeks old, and which are 30" to 48" long, 18" to 24" wide and 15" to 24" high, made from 1" wire mesh; (2) pelter pens, to which the animals are moved when weaned, and which are their homes for the rest of their short lives. These pelter pens range in size from 12" wide and 24" long to 18" wide and 36" long, and up to 18" high.

* H. F. Travis and P. J. Schaible, Fundamentals of Mink Ranching, Circular Bulletin 229, Michigan State University. This excellent report has been drawn upon freely in preparing this section.

Thus, the mink live throughout their life cycle in wire mesh cages with little or no room for natural exercise or play. It is, indeed, a spartan life. There is little or no intentional cruelty, partly because mistreatment of the animals would result in injury to and reduction in value of the pelts. The suffering, if any, undergone by the animals is of a negative type, namely, denial of the kind of activity which their wild natures presumably crave. True, the mink is not consciously aware of what he is missing since he is at least several generations removed from the wild. Since we cannot talk with the mink to get his reactions we have to guess at the degree of disagreeableness of life for him arising from the very close confinement.

This raises a very profound question for humanitarians, which arises frequently in connection with laboratory, zoo and farm animals. Is a "wild" animal raised from birth in captivity necessarily unhappy because of its confinement? Men have instincts which give them the urge to hunt and live in the open, but if denied that opportunity are they any the less happy? There is a real question as to whether any suffering is involved because of the lack of some condition which cannot be visualized or conceived. For example, can it be said of people who lived in the last century without automobiles, electricity and many other conveniences which the modern person considers essential to well-being that they "suffered" in any way because of this? Were they not just as happy in their environment as we are in our greatly expanded environment? The writer is inclined to feel that humanitarians have their hands full in trying to prevent positive cruelties and suffering, and can well leave these metaphysical problems go for the moment. If this tentative conclusion is accepted, it may be said with considerable confidence that there is comparatively little cruelty or suffering on the part of mink raised on farms or ranches, up to the time of death, despite their untamed nature and the state of confinement under which they pass their lives. We would like to know how our members feel about this really important question.

Slaughter

Several methods have been used for killing ranch-raised mink. The Michigan Bulletin referred to previously states: "A good, safe, simple method is to inject into the heart of the animal a saturated solution (all water will hold) of epsom salts or a dilute solution of Blackleaf 40 in alcohol. This method is rapid and economical. The principal disadvantage is that it requires two people. Another method is to use gas. Usually, calcium cyanide is used. . . . Chloroform, carbon monoxide and carbon tetrachloride are also used. . . . Breaking the neck by hand is another method. Once the knack is acquired, it is not a difficult operation. . . . Mink may also be killed by electrocution."

Elsewhere in this bulletin the authors say: "Several attributes are necessary for success in raising mink. First and foremost is a liking, respect and compassion for living creatures. If you do not truly have a feeling for, and a desire to work with, animals, it is useless to start in the mink business -- you will not succeed." This is one of the few references to humaneness that we have discovered in any publication about commercially used animals. The authors are to be congratulated for this consideration of the animals' welfare. Nevertheless, we must note that in their discussion of the use of carbon monoxide in killing mink, they say, "If a motor produces the carbon monoxide take care that the fumes are not hot enough to singe the fur."!!!

As all humanitarians who have had responsibilities in connection with the operation of animal shelters know, the temperature and composition of the gasses from the motor have great significance from the humane standpoint. The gasses should be cooled and purified by passage through water. Ordinary exhaust gas from a poorly-tuned motor can cause great distress on the part of the animal, which is suffocated rather than gassed.

As in so many other things, the British seem to be much more concerned over the humaneness of killing methods. An article on this subject in a British trade publication states that the electrical method of killing is very painful because the current does not pass through the brain. Nembutol cannot be injected into the heart or veins directly, in the case of mink, and so has not been used to any extent. Chloroform is slow and if handled ineptly is not humane. An inexpensive apparatus is available in England which uses nitrogen from a cylinder, run into a chamber containing the mink and replacing the air.

The descriptions of killing methods in such an excellent bulletin as the Michigan one will not lead humanitarians to have much confidence in the humaneness of the killing operations on mink farms. We strongly recommend that the Fur Animal Project at Michigan State University, as well as other fur animal research stations, give much more attention to this aspect of mink ranching. Perhaps some of our Michigan readers will write them at East Lansing, Michigan 48823, making this suggestion in a polite way.

Humane Information Services at this stage does not profess to be expert on the relative merits of all of the different methods of killing ranch mink. We feel confident, however, that these methods can be considerably, perhaps greatly improved from the humane standpoint.

TRAPPING

Publications of humane societies dealing with fur trapping almost invariably feature photographs of pitiful wild animals caught in the jaws of leghold traps or snares, sometimes covered with snow. The policy of Humane Information Services is not to publish either photographs or text describing the gory details of animal suffering. They are not necessary for an understanding of the problem or what to do about it. Those who savor pictures of suffering animals, even though in apparent pursuit of humane improvement, will not find our reports psychologically titillating. Quite a few of our readers with soft hearts, queasy stomachs and insomnia have written us saying that they can't stand to read humane publications which feature such materials. In the following discussion of trapping, excerpted from an address by the late Dr. A. F. Stevenson, founder and honorary president of the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping, only a minimum of description of trapped animals' suffering necessary for understanding the problem is given.

Unlike ranch fur production, fur trapping in the United States is not confined to the northern states. In fact, Louisiana and Maryland are two of the largest trapping states. But the big source of trapped furs in North America is Canada.

The trap commonly used to take wild fur-bearing animals in this country and Canada, known as the steel or leghold trap, is designed to catch and hold the animal by the paw. When the trap is sprung, steel jaws close on the paw with considerable impact and hold it in a vise-like grip. The shock of the impact and the tight grip on the paw, aggravated by the animal's frantic efforts to escape, inevitably cause much pain and suffering. The animal may bite frantically at the trap, perhaps injuring its teeth, and not infrequently it chews at or twists its paw until it is severed, the amputated paw remaining in the trap. This is called a "wring-off" in trapping circles.

Unless the animal thus escapes, it remains in the trap until exposure, thirst, starvation, or the arrival of the trapper brings release in death. The animal may well be in the trap for a day or two. In the far north a week or more in the trap would probably be not too uncommon. In many states there is a law requiring inspection of traps every 24 hours, but it is clearly impossible to enforce such a law and I doubt if it accomplishes much. It is the long-drawn-out agony of the leghold trap that makes trapping such a monstrously cruel business.

Many attempts have been made to develop a humane trap to take the place of the leghold trap. Only the killer trap seems to offer much hope of a humane solution.

Passing over earlier attempts at humane killer traps, let us come right away to the trap which all experts agree offers the greatest hope of general adoption on this continent, namely the Conibear trap, invented by Frank Conibear, a former trapper who is now resident in Victoria, British Columbia. The patent rights to the trap were eventually purchased by the Animal Trap Company of America (Woodstream Corp. in Canada), which is the largest manufacturer of traps on this continent, and which is now producing and marketing this trap in quantity. (It is at present available in four sizes, only two of which are generally recommended. The manufacturer claims that the Conibear trap now constitutes about half of total sales of its traps in the United States. And according to the World Federation for the Protection of Animals, the cruel leghold trap has been outlawed in most parts of Western Europe. It does not say what "humane" trap is used in its place.)

How humane, and how efficient from the trapper's point of view, is the Conibear trap? Fairly extensive tests have been carried out . . . To discuss in detail the results of these tests would

take far too long, but the following is a brief summary of the results of the more recent tests. . . . It seems to me that although the Conibear trap in its present form is certainly not a really humane trap as I have defined it, it is nevertheless a considerable improvement on the leghold trap from the humane standpoint, particularly in the case of the beaver trap. In fact, it is the most significant contribution yet made to humane trapping. Ironically, the animals most readily taken in the Conibear are those for which drowning sets with other traps are possible. The main problem is the land-based animal such as fox and fisher. It will require considerable further development and testing before the Conibear trap can really hope to displace the leghold trap for all animals. A new trap has been developed by the National Research Council of Canada, but is still to be tested.

Humane Information Services concludes that trapping is an inherently cruel method of procuring fur skins, and that if furs must be used it would be far better to have them produced on ranches, using methods of husbandry and slaughter which are as humane as possible.

SEALING

Few cruelties to animals have so drawn the horrified attention and protest of humanitarians throughout the world as has the killing of seals by clubbing, especially the reported skinning alive of baby seals during the annual seal hunt in Canada. This has resulted in the attempted boycott of seal furs, which is said to have resulted, in Europe, in bringing down the price of seal skins, although this may have reflected much more the changing fashions in furs. And in any event, this would affect the killing of seals much less than would a similar change in the demand for and prices of trapped or ranch-produced furs, since a large proportion of seals are killed by the United States Government. The number taken is determined largely by considerations other than the demand for the skins. Hence such boycotts of seal furs accomplish very little except to awaken the public to conditions surrounding the taking of fur animals generally.

Effective efforts are being made by The Humane Society of the United States to persuade the U. S. Department of the Interior to use more humane methods of killing seals on the Pribilof Islands. Actually, the killing of seals by clubbing, if properly executed, seems to be the method recommended as most humane, along with shooting by rifle. The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, of London, has studied the various methods used, and states that the use of shotguns, captive bolt pistols, and poisons should be completely banned. It states that "the killing of common seal pups ashore by clubbing or shooting should be allowed", assuming, of course, that the seals are to be killed at all.

In their horror at the brutalizing aspects of clubbing animals to death, humanitarians should not lose their sense of proportions. In recent years it has become fashionable in humane circles to emphasize seal hunting at the expense of other, far more important aspects of the fur trade. This seems to be because of the psychological impact of the idea of skinning animals alive. This particular feature of seal hunting, which results from skinning animals after an improperly administered blow, is said to be a result partly of difficult weather and other conditions affecting the hunt. Others claim that such instances are not common. Canada recently passed a law, difficult to enforce, intended to deal with this problem. Canadian humane societies have been very active in attempting to solve these problems. In any event, the conditions surrounding seal hunting are revolting. Everything possible should be done to insure the use of the most humane killing methods for seal, and if, as reported, natural conditions surrounding the hunting of seals in Canada make humane methods impracticable, the taking of those seals should be stopped. But in view of the relatively small numbers of animals involved, compared with the vastly greater numbers of other fur animals killed by even more brutal methods, we should not permit over-emphasis of baby seals to divert attention from other, more important humane problems of the fur trade.

Alternative Action Programs to Eliminate Cruelties of the Fur Trade

For decades humane societies have been passing resolutions deploring the cruelties of the fur trade and going through the motions of trying to do something about the problem. The proposed solution was, as usual, to publish leaflets and articles portraying vividly the suffering of trapped animals, and to ask members not to buy fur garments and to urge their friends not to do

so. After about a half century of this with no discernible results, a leaflet published recently by a leading humane society gives once more as its solution of the problem: "The (name of society) has called upon its members and all interested humanitarians to join in a boycott of all sealskin articles and garments." In England, another society proclaims: "Millions of animals are trapped annually by the fur trade . . . the wretched animals die in long-drawn-out agony. . . Please do remember this when you contemplate buying your next coat."

The foregoing is not written in criticism. These organizations are doing very sincerely just what they and other humane societies have been doing all these years about nearly all other important humane problems: publishing pamphlets and articles about existing sources of animal suffering, for circulation among humanitarians who have little need of such reminders. These humanitarians read the pamphlets avidly, wring their hands in renewed despair at such inhumanity, send a letter of protest to some government agency or to their local newspaper, mail a check and letter of appreciation to the humane society, and await the next leaflet on the next cruelty.

Meanwhile, the millions of fur-bearing animals continue to be cruelly killed, fur garments become even more fashionable, the societies build up even larger endowment funds, the humanitarians have the satisfying feeling of having done their part, and the animals continue to suffer.

Following are brief summaries and appraisals of various possible approaches to the fur problem. As we have said before, any national society with sufficient resources and the will to do something is welcome to take over any program developed by HIS, Inc. We will appreciate being included in the planning and execution of the program. But even that is unnecessary. We will not get mad if some other organization should adopt any of our programs and conduct it without any credit to us, provided it is done effectively with an all-out effort. We don't want somebody stepping in just to muddy the waters and to make humanitarians think that effective action is being taken, thus taking the edge off any real program. Our only desire is to see the cruelties eliminated.

There are three general methods of dealing with the fur problem in a practical way: (1) limiting the supply of furs; (2) limiting the demand for furs; (3) changing the conditions under which furs are produced to make them more humane.

Limiting the Supply of Furs

Supplies of furs might be reduced by: (1) prohibiting the importation of furs or fur skins, or of skins of trapped animals; (2) increasing import duties or establishing import quotas on furs and skins; (3) levying retail or manufacturers excise taxes on fur garments, which with any given demand for furs would lower prices to trappers, ranchers and importers, thus discouraging fur production and imports; (4) enacting federal or state legislation prohibiting the trapping of fur animals.

It is much easier to talk about doing these things than to obtain the necessary federal or state legislation. The first reaction to most of these proposals by all of the individual trappers, ranchers and importers, as well as the fur trade associations, labor unions, local chambers of commerce and politicians in areas which produce skins or manufacture fur garments, would be violent opposition. This would be so strong politically as to offset any pressure by humanitarians. However, it might be possible to obtain the cooperation of domestic ranch producers in seeking legislation limiting imports of furs, which would be of substantial benefit to them. This combination of ranchers and humanitarians could produce a powerful lobby. However, the producers might very well refuse to go along, fearing extension of these demands to other measures which could hurt rather than help them. And humanitarians may not relish the thought of consorting with fur producers.

Carrying this approach further, it might be possible to obtain the cooperation of ranch fur producers in obtaining federal legislation prohibiting both the importation of trapped furs and the trapping of furs in the United States, on the grounds of cruelty in trapping. There is no doubt that such action would at one stroke greatly reduce the amount of trapping, in other countries as well as the United States. The demand for and prices of domestically-produced ranch furs would be substantially increased.

Limiting the Demand for Furs

The demand for furs might be reduced by: (1) boycott campaigns; (2) substituting synthetic fur fabrics for natural furs.

Boycott campaigns range from simple appeals to refrain from buying fur garments, supplemented by leaflets, letters to newspaper editors, and (hopefully) magazine articles and radio-TV publicity, to a possible organized and concentrated campaign utilizing the cooperation of labor organizations, churches, women's clubs.

As previously indicated, Humane Information Services has no confidence in the effectiveness of the kind of halfhearted, desultory and scattered boycotts that have characterized the efforts of humane societies to date. They simply do not induce sufficient response to affect the fur market appreciably. Some humanitarians say, "Perhaps you are right, but at least when I or any other individual humanitarian does not buy a fur coat, or persuades some other person not to, that avoids suffering by the number of animals represented by the skins which would have been required to make those coats." Alas, even that small contribution is a will-o'-the-wisp. The same number of animals continues to be raised on the fur ranches, and trappers continue to trap as many as they can. The skins which do not go into the humanitarian's coat go into some other person's coat. Perhaps, somewhere in the fur trade, it has been necessary for some trader or manufacturer to increase his skin inventory temporarily, or to offer a lower price to some department store which can then hold a special sale and get rid of the extra skins to people who have been not quite willing to pay the regular price. Such adjustments take place in the fur trade constantly, in response to weather conditions and other factors causing small variations in demand for fur garments. They do not affect the production of furs or the total number of animals killed.

We may conclude, therefore, without any significant reservations, that the ordinary boycott campaigns against furs by humane societies serve only the desire of the societies to increase their membership rolls and contributions, and to give individual humanitarians a satisfying way of venting their emotions and indignation. Humane Information Services will not engage in such boondoggling, no matter how popular it may be.

Substitution of Synthetic Fabric Furs

Synthetic furs are made from various man-made fibers woven into fur fabrics which then are cut and fashioned into garments in much the same way as natural furs. Much progress has been made in recent years in improving the quality of these manufactured furs, but most of those on the market, especially in the United States, still are easily recognizable as "fake furs". Merchandising experts consider synthetic furs to be seriously competitive only with cloth garments. High-fashion natural furs, they think, are in a distinctly different market. You would have a hard time finding a single merchandiser of women's fashions who would consider synthetics genuinely competitive with natural furs, except perhaps with the cheaper furs made from rabbit or other cheap pelts. And production of the latter depends primarily on the demand for meat, not furs.

With continuing improvement in the quality of and in merchandising efforts applied to synthetic furs, it is to be expected that even without any help from humanitarians synthetic fur fabrics gradually will become more of a factor in the garment trade. With respect to competition with natural furs, the synthetics now occupy about the same position that oleomargarine did with respect to butter nearly a half century ago. During the next several decades we may hope for similar relative success by man-made fur fabrics.

The potential effects of substitution of man-made for natural furs are threefold: (1) the actual replacement, fur piece for fur piece; (2) by flooding the market with comparatively inexpensive but high quality synthetic fur garments which cannot be distinguished from the natural except on fairly close inspection, the "snob" value of high-priced fur garments would be greatly diminished, which would cause many women who buy furs for status to turn to other means of gratifying their ambition, and would contribute to taking away the high-fashion appeal of furs; (3) the resulting decrease in demand for furs would lower prices to trappers and ranchers sufficiently to materially affect production. Marginal producers would shift to some other employment for their labor and capital. In fact, this whole chain of events could lead to a major upheaval in the fur trade.

Such a result will not be achieved merely by urging humanitarians, and the minutely small part of the buying public which they in turn can reach, to substitute synthetic for natural fur garments. An organized, concentrated campaign will be required in order for substitution which can be accomplished by such means to have sufficient impact to materially affect the demand for and production of furs.

Any such campaign would meet with a wall of resistance from the trade, because the vested interests of nearly everyone concerned are at least partially against substitution and in favor of natural furs. For example, the big mail order firms are the leading retailers of traps for fur animals, and also do a profitable business in natural fur garments. Practically all of the business firms involved in fiber, fabric and garment manufacturing either sell to or are firms using natural as well as synthetic furs. In fact, in most cases natural furs constitute, at present, by far the most important part of their business. They are not going to do anything which could endanger their natural fur business, or which would antagonize their customers who do make or sell natural fur products. Especially if suggestions or assistance are offered by anyone connected with the humane movement will these firms be suspicious and uncooperative. In order to obtain the effective cooperation of the trade connected with the production and merchandising of synthetic furs, it would be necessary to work out a plan which would give reasonable assurance to the firms involved that they would obtain a substantial net benefit.

It would also be necessary to obtain some modification of the federal Fur Products Labeling Act of 1952. Section 4(g) of that Act prohibits false or deceptive advertising of anything bearing the word "fur". This Act is administered by the Federal Trade Commission. Since it was put through Congress by the fur trade, it appears to be designed primarily to protect the trade, although ostensibly it is also for the protection of the consumer. Under regulations issued by the Commission, it is forbidden to describe one fur in terms of another, there is a list of permissible trade names for different kinds of fur garments, and retailers must show the country of origin. The regulations prohibit the use, in connection with synthetic furs, of names which would put these furs in a favorable light before the public, such as "simulated furs", "manufactured furs", etc. Apparently it is necessary for all such synthetic fur garments to be labeled "fake" furs, a term hardly calculated to inspire confidence, to suggest beauty and utility, or to encourage the idea that synthetic furs can be desirable substitutes for natural ones. Of course, that is the real purpose of the regulation, to protect the natural fur trade. It would be very difficult to obtain modification of either the Act or the regulations promulgated under its authority.

Still another requisite of an effective program to promote the use of synthetic furs would be an effort to persuade manufacturers of synthetic fur garments to produce the highest possible quality. The cheap "fake fur" articles now put out, such as jackets selling for \$35, are too obviously cheap imitations. The limitation imposed by the name "fake fur" encourages the production of this type of garments. In England, where this limitation does not exist, some manufacturers have produced very high quality simulated fur garments. These sell for good prices, although, of course, not anywhere near the price of comparable natural fur garments. If necessary, arrangements could be made for the importation of these high-quality garments, which are as yet made only in limited quantities in England. Certainly, high-quality simulated fur garments are not generally merchandised in either Europe or North America, and are not generally available to the public at this time.

It would be necessary to provide not only a source of supply of high-quality simulated fur garments, but also to make arrangements for merchandising these garments so as to have them available to prospective buyers, and to stimulate interest in and the demand for these new furs by the application of the kind of marketing methods suitable to the introduction of a new line of merchandise.

A final step would be channeling the efforts of as many as possible of the humane societies in the country to help out in the program at appropriate points in the marketing procedure, by a united, concentrated effort.

If the humane societies could get together for one big effort of this kind, combining their resources for a period of, say five years, until the program had been given a good start, there is little doubt that the effects on the use of natural furs would be tremendous. In the past, it has never been found possible to get the humane societies to work together on anything of this kind.

Promoting More Humane Methods of Procurement

Changing the conditions under which furs are produced to make them more humane may be effected in four ways: (1) state or federal legislation requiring the use of the Conibear trap, or of some equally or more humane killer trap which may be developed, in all trapping operations; (2) state or federal legislation requiring the use of humane slaughter methods on fur ranches; (3) bringing pressure on the Department of the Interior to adopt more humane methods of killing the 60,000 seals slaughtered annually by the federal government; (4) cooperation with trappers' and ranch producers' organizations to obtain voluntary adoption of humane traps, humane methods of killing ranch-produced animals, and more humane confinement of fur animals on ranches.

The legislative route specified in the first three of these possible programs would involve a long, arduous and bitterly-fought campaign, even more difficult than the so far largely unsuccessful campaigns to include ritual slaughter under the humane slaughter laws. It is highly doubtful that humane societies and individual humanitarians would work as hard on such fur legislation as they have on humane slaughter of food animals. And most of the work on humane slaughter has been done by only a few societies.

Humane organizations, especially in Canada, have been working hard and intelligently to promote the use of the Conibear trap by educational methods. The largest trap manufacturer, which now holds the patent rights for this trap, no doubt has done its part. All of this should and will continue, but the analysis by Dr. Stevenson previously given in this report shows that there are many obstacles to this approach.

There may be more humane methods of killing seals than those used by the Department of the Interior in annually slaughtering the 60,000 seals on the Pribilof Islands. If so, it seems probable that the Department will adopt them if continuing pressure is applied by humane societies. But the Department now claims that its methods are humane, or as nearly so as is practicable. To show otherwise, and to develop better methods, would require sending a qualified humane representative to the Islands during the killing season. An observer for the HSUS has attended the hunt, but more definite attempts to work out better methods seem to be needed. Happily, this particular project does not conflict in any way with any of the others proposed herein.

By far the most promising way of promoting more humane methods of fur procurement, however, is cooperation with the various associations of ranch producers. The writer discussed this with officials of a fur ranchers' association in Great Britain, who expressed much interest in the idea. Although it is possible that they would not be willing to work with humane organizations, this could be made quite advantageous to them. First, they could be assured of our cooperation in other matters, such as tariffs, import quotas, etc. Second, the humane societies could conduct a campaign urging fur garment buyers to purchase domestic ranch-produced mink furs on grounds of both humaneness and superior quality. This would be far easier than to persuade people not to buy furs. And third, it would be possible to arrange for the award of a "seal of approval" for furs domestically produced under specified humane conditions, accompanied by a campaign to persuade the public to insist on this seal on all fur garments purchased. The mechanics of such a procedure are by no means impracticable. Ranchers would have a real incentive to adopt humane methods. And it is believed that many ranchers would be proud of their humane seal of approval.

CHOICE OF METHODS FOR DEALING WITH THE FUR PROBLEM

It is obvious that some of these methods of dealing with the fur problem are not complementary, but mutually exclusive. The most important example of this is the substitution of synthetic for natural furs, versus cooperation with domestic ranch producers to accomplish various other important objectives. Producers certainly would not take kindly to proposals for cooperation with humane societies engaged in a campaign to put them out of business. On the other hand, the various programs to reduce or eliminate trapping would be complementary to any cooperation with the fur ranchers.

Keeping in mind these important problems of mutual inclusivity and exclusivity, we find that all of the foregoing separate programs really add up to two different major programs. If anything of real effectiveness is to be done to eliminate the major causes of suffering by animals used in the fur trade, we will have to choose between these two general approaches (A or B in the following outline):

- A. Decrease demand for natural furs.
 - 1. Major program -- substitution of synthetic for natural furs.
 - a. Development of better simulated furs.
 - b. Complete merchandising program.
 - c. Modification of regulations under Fur Products Labeling Act.
 - 2. Possible supplementary programs.
 - a. Prohibition of fur imports, or higher tariffs, or import quotas.
 - b. Retail excise tax or manufacturers tax on natural furs.
 - c. Legislation prohibiting or regulating trapping.
 - d. Work with Interior Department to change seal killing methods.
- B. Substitute humanely-produced for other natural furs.
 - 1. Major program -- cooperation with domestic ranch producers.
 - a. Arrange for adoption of best humane practices on ranches.
 - b. Possible "Seal of Approval" program.
 - c. Complete merchandising program to encourage use of ranch furs.
 - d. Pressure on stores by humanitarians.
 - 2. Possible supplementary programs.
 - a. Prohibition of imports of all, or of trapped furs.
 - b. Increased tariffs, or import quotas, on all furs or trapped furs.
 - c. Retail excise tax on garments made from trapped furs.
 - d. State or federal legislation prohibiting or regulating trapping.
 - e. Work with Interior Department to change seal killing methods.

If it is assumed that production of fur animals on ranches can be made reasonably humane -- see discussion of fur ranching -- and if preliminary negotiation indicates that it is possible to gain the active cooperation of ranch-producer organizations, then it appears that Program B above would be considerably more effective than Program A. After all, even with Program A in successful operation it would require a long period of time to make any real indentation on fashions and other conditions sufficient to bring about a very substantial shift from natural furs to synthetics.

Moreover, the synthetics program would have the open or hidden opposition of the entire fur trade, from trappers and ranchers to retailers. That would be a powerful obstacle. In contrast, the combination of ranch producers and humanitarians would create a powerful pressure group in favor of Program B, and other elements of the fur trade except trappers would have little reason to oppose it.

Before a choice can be made of alternative approaches to the fur problem, and before the essential details of any plan can be researched and filled in, it is necessary to know how humanitarians will react to these proposals. After all, nothing will be accomplished by anyone without the enthusiastic cooperation of humanitarians. Sometimes we become frustrated over what seem to be the over-emotional actions of humanitarians, who occasionally appear to think exclusively with their hearts and not with their heads. But when the chips are down, it is these emotional animal lovers who write the letters and provide the funds that keep the humane movement going. Without their approval and cooperation no humane program can be successful. We believe they should be included in the preliminary planning of humane programs much more than they have been in the past.

So, please read this report all over again. Then sit down and write us a letter stating your general reactions to the proposal to inaugurate a comprehensive and effective action program of this kind. Do you think that other humanitarians you know and your local humane society will be willing to actively participate? Which of the two major types of programs (A or B) do you think has most chances for success, and why? What is your reaction to the various supplementary programs?

As we have said before, our very limited stenographic resources will not permit a personal reply. But your letter will be read carefully by the writer, and will be helpful no matter what you say in it. We welcome disagreement as much as agreement.

And while you are about it, why not send in the Return Coupon if you have not already done so, whether or not you wish to make any contribution for this work at this time.

Protest from a Dog Lover

By Emily F. Gleockler, Secretary-Treasurer

You should see the many nice letters we received in response to the story in Report No. 3 about Stokely the cat. One lady said that our President, Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen ("Doc" to all his friends) is quite evidently a feline officiendo. Well, he is. He loves cats and cats love him.

It's funny. Doc couldn't have greater love for animals than I do. But cats don't take well to me, and I'm afraid of cats -- not that they will hurt me, but that I will hurt them. So I'm awkward in handling them.

Now dogs -- that's different. They love me and I love them. We get along. Doc says it's because I feel insecure, and the dog's manifest devotion gives me confidence in myself. He says he likes cats because they don't fawn on people, but treat us as equals. He says he doesn't need a psychological prop!

Maybe so, but his stories about wonderful cats he has owned don't make me envious. I had my dog Teddy, until he passed away from old age a couple of years ago. Ever since, I can't visit an animal shelter and see a black cocker spaniel, so lonely and pathetic in his barren cage, without crying.

That Teddy did everything Stokely did, except purr. And a lot more. But the thing he did that absolutely got me was simply to sit there and look at me, with those wonderful eyes just pouring out love and affection.

I guess that's what a woman needs to receive and to give more than anything else -- love and affection. I've had plenty of opportunities for sharing those qualities with humans, but there always seemed to be something too practical or self-centered connected with the sharing. With Teddy, it was different. What we did for each other was entirely voluntary, from the heart. He would do anything for me, and I would do anything for him. How we loved each other! It still hurts to think about it.

I know that plenty of other dog owners understand just what I mean. But there are many who don't. You see their dogs everywhere -- dogs which serve as playthings for the children, as watchdogs to protect the family while Daddy is away on business trips, as status symbols, or as objects of baby talk accompanying an occasionally-felt mother instinct.

Teddy was a watchdog -- but only because he wanted to be, not because I expected it of him. He was a playmate -- but he enjoyed the play as much as I did. He didn't have to suffer under a barrage of baby talk, because he wasn't a baby substitute, no matter what the psychologists say!

Doc says that's right -- Teddy was a lover substitute, meeting a woman's need for love and devotion more surely than any selfish human lover. Maybe so. I've forgotten a number of men who once were important in my life, but I'll never forget my darling Teddy.

Return Coupon

(For those who did not return the coupon in previous reports)

(Please place a check mark in the appropriate spaces below and return in a stamped envelope to: Humane Information Services, Inc., 675 Pinellas Point Drive, St. Petersburg, Florida 33705.)

- (1) I wish ☐ (do not wish ☐) to be kept on the mailing list for future Reports to Humanitarians (you do not have to become a member or contribute in order to continue receiving them).
- (2) My name, address and zip code used on the reverse side are ☐ (are not ☐) correct.
If not, the correct name, address and zip code are: _____
- (3) I wish: (a) to become an Associate Member and enclose \$1 annual dues ☐;
(b) to become a Patron Member and enclose \$ _____ (any amount over \$1).
- (4) I am ☐ (am not ☐) able and willing to write occasional letters and report local conditions to you on request, in connection with various programs for the protection of animals.

New Director and Vice President of Humane Information Services, Inc.

We are very pleased to announce the election of a new director and vice president of Humane Information Services, Inc., Mr. John D. Fite, a distinguished attorney and devoted humanitarian of Clearwater, Florida. Mr. Fite is a member of the Clearwater law firm of Richards, Nodine, Gilkey and Fite.

Mr. Fite received the B.S. degree cum laude from Davidson College in 1955, and was elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa. He attended Duke University School of Law, was granted the L.L.B. degree "with distinction", and was elected to membership in The Order of the Coif.

Mr. Fite has served on the boards of directors of a half dozen community organizations in Clearwater. Despite these community services, he has been an active member of the board of directors of the Clearwater S.P.C.A., a member of its Executive Committee for four years, and its legal counsel for six years. He worked on the recent reincorporation of the Florida Federation of Humane Societies, Inc., and helped draft its new bylaws. All of this legal work for humane organizations has been performed without compensation, as a public service.

Humane Information Services is a national humane society, with members in every state. The geographical concentration of its officers, who originally lived in the East, Midwest and South, is a matter of convenience in expediting the business of the society.

We know from past experience that Mr. Fite is a truly devoted and highly capable humanitarian. His election gives Humane Information Services two principal directors and officers whose ages and capabilities help insure continuance of our society in the years to come in accordance with the policies established by our founders.

Mr. Fite will be glad to advise, without charge, on any legal or tax matters pertaining to bequests or large contributions to Humane Information Services. He may be addressed in care of this society. If desired, the envelope may be labeled "Confidential", and will be passed on to him unopened for a personal and confidential reply.

THIS MESSAGE IS FOR BUSY PEOPLE WHO GET OUR REPORTS--We know that some of our readers are so busy with local humane society work and personal responsibilities that they have little time for reading. If you do not have time to read all of these reports, you may wish to file them for possible future reference when questions arise regarding specific humane problems and programs. In any event, you cannot be too busy to send in the Return Coupon, letting us know that you are sufficiently interested to wish to remain on our mailing list. No contribution is required, but we do think that it should be worth six cents postage to let us know you want to receive our reports.

REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

No. 4

June, 1968

Contents

ANSWERS TO READERS' COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Laboratory Legislation
How to Help Prevent Suffering
The Rat Poison Problem

THE FUR TRADE-- AN IMPORTANT HUMANE PROBLEM

Fur Ranching
Trapping
Seals

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