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(No. 17) – The Use of Cruel Leghold Traps Can be Eliminated

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A TOPMOST SOURCE OF ANIMAL SUFFERING

Animals suffer from the application of many horrible devices and practices at the hand of man, but it would be difficult to find one so cruel as the steel-jaw leghold trap almost universally used in capturing wild fur animals. The suffering of food animals subjected to the atrocities of inhumane slaughter is about the only abuse of comparable intensity which affects such large numbers of animals.

Author Sterling North said: "The leghold trap is the most sadistic invention since the rack and torture wheels of the Middle Ages. No one but a barbarian would use such an intensely painful device."

The Honorable John G. Richards, former governor of South Carolina, stated: "In my opinion the steel trap is a devilish device that should never have been invented. . . . The victim of the steel trap is made to suffer torture that is inexcusable and inhuman."

How the Trap Works

The steel-jaw or leghold trap is designed to catch and hold the animal by the paw (see photograph of fox). When the trap is sprung, steel jaws close on the paw with great impact and hold it in a vise-like grip which, aggravated by the animal's frantic efforts to escape, causes terrific pain and suffering (see photograph of wolf). The animal may bite frantically at the trap, perhaps injuring its teeth, and frequently it chews at or twists its paw until it is severed, the amputated paw remaining in the trap (see photograph of muskrat leg in trap). In trapping circles this is called a "wring-off".

Unless the animal thus escapes, it remains in the trap until shock, exposure, gangrene, thirst, starvation, freezing cold or the arrival of the trapper brings release in death (see photograph of frozen fox in trap). The animal may well be in the trap for a day or a week or more. In many states there is a law requiring inspection of traps every 24 hours, but it is clearly impossible to enforce such a law. It is the long-drawn-out agony of the leghold trap, especially, that makes trapping such a monstrously cruel business.



The steel trap holds the animal's leg in a vice-like grip. (Photograph from Canadian Association for Humane Trapping)

Since the leghold trap frequently is used in areas close to human habitations, many dogs, cats, rabbits and other domestic and wild animals which are not desired by the trapper are subjected to this suffering (see photograph of rabbit). The number of these unwanted animals caught in the traps is said to exceed greatly the number of fur-bearing animals of commercial value. Even small children are endangered.

Millions of Animals Suffer

Not only is the suffering of the individual animals caught with leghold traps much more intense than for most other animals exploited by man, the numbers of animals so procured are far greater than those involved in most other comparable abuses.

The most reliable data on the world production of fur skins have been those contained in a publication of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, of Great Britain: "Facts About Furs" (1957). This booklet is now out of date, but we understand that the author, Dr. F. Jean Vinter, has completely revised it, and that it will be published in this country by the Animal Welfare Institute. (Continued in second column)

REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

No. 17 - September, 1971

EDITORS:

Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen
Miss Emily F. Gleockler

Humane Information Services
Incorporated

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

4521 - 4th Street South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33705

Welfare Institute. We also understand that Mr. William T. Redding, director of Argus Archives, in New York City, has prepared a comprehensive compendium of facts about furs which will be published shortly. In addition, the fish and game departments of both the federal and some state governments compile such data. Those issued by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission are especially detailed and helpful.

But until the over-all compilations referred to above are available, we must fall back on our own rough estimates, which are based on various sources.

We fully appreciate that any such estimates may be quite inaccurate. For example, the Humane Society of the United States, in the January-February, 1969, issue of its News, reported a catch for the United States of "over 6.5 million animals". But in its leaflet published in 1971 it says that "trappers estimate 30 million fur-bearers

to rectify the situation, it is necessary to know some facts about the fur industry. If humanitarians will not have the patience to understand these facts, they will continue to be ineffective.

Effects of Propaganda on Demand for Furs

The humane society propaganda has been directed mainly at reducing fur production by reducing the demand for furs. This reflects the belief prevalent among humanitarians that if one woman is persuaded not to buy a fur garment composed of, say, 40 skins, that many lives of fur animals will be spared. That is not true, as we shall see.

Although circulated to a much greater extent among a relatively very small number of humanitarians than among the general public, the propaganda against furs has affected to some extent the demand for fur garments, especially those made from sealskins. However, other conditions in recent years have exerted a much more powerful influence.

First, has been the rebellion of the younger generation against the "establishment". Many college girls who

formerly aped their mothers' expensive furs now consider them "square". And many shop girls who longed for a fur coat to make them appear affluent now look to other style criteria. Even the "hippie" styles have helped to outmode furs with young people.



Trapped animals frequently gnaw or twist their legs off, leaving them in the trap. This is called a "wring-off". (Photograph from Facts About Furs, UFAW, England; taken by W. J. Schoonmaker, Defenders of Fur-bearers, Washington, D.C.)

All of these styling changes have been abetted by the advent of "simulated" or "fake" furs, some of which cannot be distinguished from the real thing except on close inspection. This has not only provided a substitute for furs for those who are unable to afford the latter, but more importantly has reduced the "status symbol" value of fur garments.

Economic conditions affecting consumer expenditures in general also affect the demand for furs. When fear of losing jobs or (See TRAPPING, page 2, column 1)

The Use of Cruel Leghold Traps Can be Eliminated

are trapped and killed annually in the United States and the total may be as high as 100 million". This wide discrepancy, not in any way the fault of the HSUS, merely illustrates the fact that official figures, probably based on sales records, generally are much lower than estimates by either humane societies or trappers.

We estimate that the world production of skins from wild fur-bearing animals must be at least 100 million. If trapped animals not suited for use as furs, and wring-offs, are included, the world total of trapped animals may very well be several hundred million annually.

In the United States alone, the number of wild fur skins procured in 1969, according to official figures, was 9,065,622, but the number varies widely from year to year (see discussion of ecology which follows). This total consisted of beaver 169,000, fox 216,000, wild mink 230,000, muskrat 5,500,000, nutria 1,763,000, raccoon 1,188,000. If squirrel were included, the total would be much higher.

In Canada, the number of wild animals trapped in the season 1969-70 was about 3,139,000, but it has been much greater than this in some other years. The most important species were muskrat, beaver, squirrel, mink, ermine and fox.

But regardless of the unreliability of the available data or estimates, for the world fur trade, it is obvious that the number of animals involved is so huge, and the cruelty to each animal so great, that trapping represents one of the topmost sources of animal suffering at the hand of man.

Many Words - Little Action

The cruelties of trapping have been described, in photographs and text, by many humane society publications in this country and abroad, over a period of many years. Such descriptions, unfortunately, have not led to effective action to outlaw the leghold trap, except in a few countries, notably England and Norway. In order to understand why this is so, and what can be done (Continued in third column)



A wolf caught in leghold trap howls in pain. (Photograph from Canadian Association for Humane Trapping)

September, 1971

REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS No. 17

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TRAPPING — from page 1

income grows, or the value of securities declines, people tend to become more careful in their spending. Among the first items to be affected are the luxury items such as fur garments. This had a very important influence on the domestic demand for furs beginning in 1970.

Reduction in Demand Not Necessarily a Reduction in Furs

In considering these developments, the realistic humanitarian must keep in mind that a reduction in the demand for furs may not result in any significant reduction in the number of fur animals procured. When the demand falls off, the first effect is a decrease in the price of furs and fur skins. When the price of furs is reduced, because some women refuse to buy them any longer, other women who previously wanted but could not afford to buy furs are brought into the market. There will always be a buyer for the available fur skins, at a price. Only if the price declines sufficiently to cause trappers and other fur skin producers to cease or reduce their operations are the actual takings of fur animals reduced.

Demand for Furs in United States Affects Trapping Very Little

But even these changes in domestic demand for furs upon the prices and production of fur skins affect trapping in the United States very little. The reason for this is that a small proportion of the animal skins used in the production of fur garments for the domestic market is trapped. In this country, the production and high-styling by furriers of ranch-raised mink, with their attractive colors and other features produced by "mutations" or selective breeding, resulted in the mink garments practically taking over the fur market. Most of the skins of wild animals trapped in the United States, composed in major part of muskrat and nutria, go to foreign rather than domestic markets.

Thus, all of the propaganda against furs in the United States, even if much more successful than it has been, can do little to affect trapping in this country. Its effects, if any, are reflected in the production of ranch-raised mink.

Effects on Fur Production of Costs and Job Opportunities

Fur skin production is affected not only by the price received for skins, but also by costs of production and alternative opportunities for employment of the trapper's or producer's capital and labor. Improved job and business opportunities, and increased costs of production in "fur farming", undoubtedly were very important factors in re-

(Continued in second column)

ducing fur production in the United States in recent years, especially the production of ranch-raised mink.

Ecological Conditions

Also very important in affecting the number of wild animals trapped are ecological conditions which influence the numbers of fur animals available for trapping. This is well illustrated by conditions in Louisiana, the most important single source of trapped fur skins in this country.



Unless its leg is severed, the animal remains in the trap until shock, exposure, gangrene, thirst, starvation, freezing cold or the arrival of the trapper brings release in death. (Photograph from The National Equine (and Smaller Animals) Defence League, England)

In the 1968-69 season, Louisiana produced 3,469,040 pelts, of which 1,556,764 were muskrat and 1,754,028 were nutria. These two represented, therefore, about 95 percent of the total, the remaining 158,248 representing, in order of importance, raccoon, wild mink, opossum, otter, skunk, fox, beaver and lynx. The Louisiana production of muskrat is about 20 percent of the world's supply, and of nutria about 95 percent.

Nearly all of this production of muskrat and nutria goes to foreign countries, which provide a ready market for all trapped skins, although at prices which vary widely with the size of the annual "crop" and general economic conditions. Variations in the annual production of trapped animals in Louisiana depend largely on weather and other conditions of the ecology.

Musk rats thrive on prolonged wet cycles with mild winters. But great storms inundate the marshes with salt water for protracted periods and destroy most of the fur-bearers. When weather conditions are very favorable, the natural levees become so perforated by muskrat burrows that the prime muskrat habitat turns into "a soupy mass of decaying vegetation". The muskrat population then declines until conditions become favorable once more.

Because of these fluctuations in the ecology, the muskrat takings in Louisiana have varied between 8,337,411 in the 1945-46 season and 201,510 in the 1964-65 season. Other ecological conditions affect production in other states.

Propaganda Alone Not Effective

Thus, a great variety of both demand and supply conditions affect the number of animals trapped, in other countries as well as in the United States. Of these, the propaganda designed to persuade consumers not to buy furs is a very minor item. If carried on effectively over a long period of years, it will have some effect. But humanitarians should wake up to the fact that this approach to elimination of the cruelties of trapping will not accomplish its objective in the foreseeable future, unless combined with a much more direct approach to the trapping problem.

In our Report to Humanitarians No. 4, issued in 1968, we tried to analyze the situation and suggest a number of more direct approaches, which require the cooperation of humane societies. We received a flood of letters from our readers agreeing with these suggestions. But the humane movement in the United States has given no indication whatever of a desire to pursue such a constructive and aggressive program.

Seals Monopolize Attention

The single aspect of fur animal procurement that has occupied the center of the humane society stage in recent years is the killing of seals in Canadian waters and on the Pribilof Islands in Alaska.

The seal harvest involves much less than one percent of fur animals killed yearly in

(Continued in third column)

the world, and in the United States and Canada alone, only about 1.6 percent of trapped animals. On the average the seals are killed with much less suffering than that experienced by other fur animals, and by far greater numbers of "baby" food animals. In fact, thousands of puppies and kittens, not to mention dogs and cats, suffer more during "euthanasia" in some humane society shelters and public pounds.

Moreover, it is difficult to alter or eliminate the seal hunts without possibly doing more harm than good. If the slaughter of the Canadian baby seals is eliminated, the harvest may be thrown back into open water, with much more potential suffering. If the Alaskan seal harvest is eliminated, the seals could be taken on the open ocean, with much greater suffering under conditions which, until the international agreement went into effect, almost made the seals extinct.

One bill that has been introduced in the present Congress, in response to all the clamor, would prohibit the clubbing of Alaskan seals. Unless and until some better method of stunning the seals is found, this could make things worse rather than better, by forcing the use of some less humane method. We are familiar with the suggestions for different methods, and consider none of them now available to be as humane as clubbing, which really causes less suffering than many ways in which animals are killed, although it sounds very brutal. We have suggested to federal officials possible improvements in the method of clubbing. But we would not advocate, at this time, any shift to some other method, if the seals continue to be taken.



Many animals not wanted by the trapper are caught, including dogs and cats. Even small children may be endangered. (Photograph from The National Equine (and Smaller Animals) Defence League, England)

Moreover, any prohibition of the killing of seals in Alaska might result in a jump from the frying pan into the fire. Killing seals on the open ocean, with rifle fire or in other possible ways, could be infinitely worse. Only if the present international agreement can be modified to ensure against a much worse situation developing, should there be any permanent stoppage of the Alaskan seal harvest. The Harris-Pryor bill (H.R. 6558 and S. 1315) is intelligently written to take these complicated factors into account, but conceivably could lead to real difficulties if other concerned nations refuse to cooperate.

Thus, the seal problem involves many complexities that require calm, objective handling, not the kind of highly emotional reacting which has characterized the campaign to date. Hearings on the Harris-Pryor bill could be a vehicle for getting these practical considerations into the open.

Humane Societies Benefit More Than the Seals!

But the cause of the seals has become too popular to be abandoned as a profitable crusade, substituting realistic efforts to deal with the problem on an objective basis. For the truth is that the seal campaign has brought money pouring into the coffers of some societies that have done the most to exploit it. One new society, apparently engaged only in this one project, is said to have received, in one year, an amount nearly five times as great as the total public contributions to Humane Information Services during the first five years of its existence!

The seal campaign has been aided and abetted by the news media, especially TV, always quick to detect emotional issues. A single documentary film exposing the "atrocities" of the seal hunt to millions of TV viewers evokes a tremendous response.

(See TRAPPING, page 3, column 1)

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TRAPPING — from page 2 —**Tears and Big Eyes**

It would have been difficult to drum up all of this interest had it not been for a few physical facts and deep-seated emotional reactions. The baby seals in Canada are killed on the ice, and when the blood runs red on this white background it seems much more gruesome than, for example, on some dark grey packinghouse floor. Even if no actual cruelty were involved, such bloody sights, appearing on color TV and in color photographs in the magazines, would arouse the indignation of the public.

And the Canadian seals receiving this attention are babies! They have the most appealing big eyes, with unbelievably soulful expressions. Moreover, the mother seals, which long-time observers of the seal hunt on the Canadian ice say are seldom present when the less mobile baby seals are killed, are said to shed genuine tears when they see their babies done away with. One could hardly find, in the whole animal kingdom, anything better calculated to arouse the emotions of tenderhearted humans than babies and mother-love! Unfortunately, those engaged in the campaign against the Alaskan seal hunt were lacking this great maternal appeal until recently, when the claim was made that some mother seals were mistakenly included in the pods of bachelor seals driven to the slaughtering grounds, leaving their babies to die of starvation.

If any reader gets the impression, from these candid remarks, that Humane Information Services lacks sympathy for babies or mothers, or for any animals made to suffer, they are dead wrong. What we are opposed to is permitting maudlin sentiment based on motherhood and physical appearance to so upset the priorities of the humane movement as to seriously interfere with its effectiveness in dealing with the great sources of animal suffering crying vainly for effective attention, such as trapping.

Ranch Mink Much More Important Than Seals

Even the ranch or farm-raised mink are much more important than seals in any well-planned program to eliminate the suffering of fur-bearers.

During the 1969 season the number of ranch mink produced and killed in the United States was 5,455,000, and in Canada it was over 1,800,000, a total for North America of about seven million. In sharp contrast, the number of hair seals (including the "baby" seals) taken in Canada was only 139,152 (210,802 in 1969-70). Add to these the approximately 60,000 seals killed in Alaska, and we have a total for the two countries of around 200 to 250 thousand seals taken, in comparison with seven million ranch mink.

These Reports to Humanitarians have carried a number of articles about the great need for developing a more humane method of killing the ranch mink. Certainly this affects an incomparably greater number of animals than any seals, baby or adult, that suffer, on the average, less than the mink. Moreover, Humane Information Services has uncovered a method of using injections of sodium pentobarbital which would be practical, cheap and efficient for mink ranchers, making the production and slaughter of ranch mink as humane as for humanely-slaughtered food animals. By persuading the producers to adopt this method, far more would be accomplished to reduce animal suffering than by any conceivable changes in the Canadian and Alaskan seal hunts. Yet, there have been few comments indicating interest on the part of our members, much less any show of interest by the humane societies that have been plugging the seal business for all it is worth in new members and contributions.

Where can one find a better example of why the humane movement has accomplished so little, while making so much noise, during more than a century of operation?

Development of Humane Traps

In Canada, efforts to deal with the trapping problem have been much better directed and more fruitful than in the United States.

An important approach to the trapping problem has been the drive to produce a more humane type of trap. But these efforts have been drawn out over a long period of time, with no universal (suited to all species of fur animals), reasonably efficient, low-cost and humane trap yet available.

The Canadian humane societies, for which

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we have constantly-increasing respect, have gone about this in a sensible, business-like way. A number of these societies, including the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals, of British Columbia, the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Ontario Humane Society, and some other provincial societies, have demonstrated that it is possible for humane societies to work together on a problem like this without destructive bickering and organizational jealousies. When we write to them for information, we receive long, informative replies, generally concluding with the statement that our letter is being forwarded to an official of another society who also is well informed on the subject. What a contrast to inter-society relationships in the United States!

The Canadian societies have fostered a continuing program designed to develop a humane trap. For many years the leading candidate for a humane trap that could be used in trapping most of the fur-bearing wild animals has been the Conibear, invented by Frank Conibear, a Canadian former trapper who is a leading opponent of the leghold trap. It is manufactured in several sizes suitable for different animals. The large size is especially good for beaver, and the small size for muskrat. The Conibear does not catch the animal by the leg, but breaks the neck. Unconsciousness usually occurs in a matter of seconds, and death is almost immediate (see photograph of squirrel).

The difficulty with the Conibear trap, aside from its higher cost compared with the leghold trap, is that it is not well suited to all species. Mink, for example, a very hardy animal, is not always killed immediately by the Conibear. Possible changes in the trap designed to make it more suitable for universal use are being made.

A number of other kinds of humane traps have been invented and tested, with varying results. They include the CX 13 and 14, the Instant Killer (formerly Northern Killer), the Compensator, Canada Trap, Fisher Trap, the Cesar, the Casey Killer, the Bigelow, and, most recent, the Mohawk. The latter, designed by the National Research Council, seems to have particular promise, has been improved since its fairly recent introduction, and appears to be mechanically efficient. But no conclusive tests of its killing capacity have yet been conducted.

The different candidates for the most humane and practical trap have been undergoing evaluation by a highly qualified team at McMaster University, in Ontario, Canada, under the direction of the Humane Trap Development Committee of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and supported by all of the leading Canadian societies and even by some trappers' organizations. This evaluation is of their design features and mechanical efficiency.

Those traps which appear to have the best quick-kill potential will then be tested under simulated natural conditions using live animals. The latter work will not get started for some months, however. The activities of the Committee have now been shifted to the University of Guelph, also in Ontario, Canada. The scope of the work has been widened, and the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies says the Committee "is determined to solve all problems within about two years". This time goal is very important, as will be seen from the discussion of possible remedial legislation which appears in the Humane Legislation Digest that is part of this Report.

Voluntary Shift to Humane Traps Difficult to Obtain

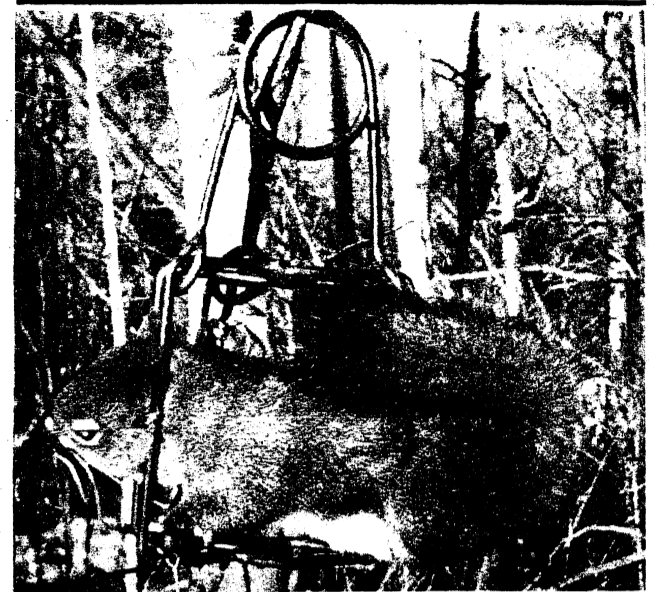
Meanwhile, in Canada, efforts have been made by a number of humane societies to induce trappers to shift voluntarily from the leghold to the Conibear trap. These efforts have included education, demonstrations, and subsidization of part of the costs of the higher-priced humane trap.

These efforts have been partially effective, as indicated by estimates that between 15 and 20 percent of the traps used in that country now are the Conibear.

It seems evident, however, that voluntary conversion will prove to be a long-drawn-out process. Promotion of the Conibear (or any

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other humane trap) for uses for which it is most suitable, such as for beaver, can be expected to yield quicker results than when it becomes necessary to move into other uses or regions where obstacles are greater.



Squirrel . . . killed instantly in humane trap. (Photograph from Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals, Canada)

It may be concluded, therefore, that voluntary adoption of the humane trap will not be fast enough to provide a satisfactory solution of the problem. If the cruelties of the leghold trap are to be substantially reduced, the use of this inhumane device must be banned.

Fortunately, we now have a good opportunity to accomplish this goal. This is discussed in a report on page 4 of this issue, from our sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc. As our members know, Humane Information Services, as a tax-exempt charitable organization, cannot espouse specific legislation or engage in political affairs. That is why the National Association for Humane Legislation, which is not tax exempt, was formed. However, we can inform you, in these Reports, about what others have done or are doing in the legislative field. We believe you will find the report from NAHL to be highly significant.

REPORT ON EUTHANASIA POSTPONED

As mentioned in our last issue, we had intended to include in this one a full report on improved methods of euthanasia in animal shelters and public pounds. However, delays in obtaining certain essential information make it necessary to postpone printing this important analysis. We are trying to get more evidence relating to use of the decompression machine, the most popular device for large shelters, and also to pin down the best procedures for making sodium pentobarbital more easily available.

Our action program to make euthanasia really humane already has borne fruit. We just received another letter from the president of a local humane society stating that they had switched to injections of sodium pentobarbital, from a much less desirable method, and acknowledging that our articles and letters on the subject were the deciding factor in bringing about the change. It makes us feel mighty good to receive these evidences that our program is working, eliminating suffering by many thousands of animals that deserve our very best efforts to give them a really humane death when they have to go. We would like to hear from any local society that has been influenced to improve its method of euthanasia as a result of our efforts.

LIVESTOCK TRUCKING — from page 4 —

also to the rigors of weather.

NAHL has taken the position that a comprehensive law setting forth humane requirements for transporting animals by truck should be enacted after a thorough study of the problems involved. The law should cover other conditions in addition to length of time confined in the vehicle.

Representative William L. Dickinson, of Alabama, has introduced, in the present Congress, a bill, H.R. 9086, to amend the Livestock Transportation Act to include common carriers by motor vehicle. This would be a good beginning in ameliorating the suffering of livestock transported by truck. We suggest you write to Congressman Dickinson, at the House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515, expressing support for the bill.

Humane Legislation Digest

Representative Broomfield, of Michigan, has introduced, in the present Congress, a bill (H.R. 8784) which is remarkable for the forthright language used. Its five sections read as follows:

* * * * *

Section 1. It is hereby declared to be the public policy of the United States to discourage the manufacture, sale, and use of leghold or steel-jaw traps on animals in the United States and abroad.

Section 2. No fur or leather, whether raw or in finished form, shall be shipped in interstate or foreign commerce if such fur or leather comes from animals trapped in any State of the Union or any foreign country which has not banned the manufacture, sale, or use of leghold or steel-jaw traps.

Section 3. The Secretary of Commerce shall compile, publish, and keep current a list of States of the Union and foreign countries which have not banned the manufacture, sale, and use of leghold or steel-jaw traps.

Section 4. Anyone shipping or receiving fur or leather in contravention of Section 2 of this Act shall, for the first offense, be fined not more than \$2,000; for the second or subsequent offenses, he shall be fined not more than \$5,000 and shall be sentenced to a jail term of one to three years.

Section 5. The provisions of this Act shall become effective four years after the date of its enactment.

* * * * *

A companion bill, S. 2084, was introduced in the Senate on June 17 by Senator Bayh, of Indiana. Herein, the two identical bills will be referred to as "the bill".

Passage Would Stop Use of Cruel Traps

It is evident that passage of the Broomfield-Bayh bill would go a long way to put an end to the use of the cruel leghold trap in the western world.

Passage of this bill would force the various states in which fur production is important to pass laws forbidding use of the leghold trap. This is true, even though most domestically-trapped skins are sold abroad, because the bill would prohibit foreign as well as domestic commerce in the skins from states that failed to pass a law.

Foreign countries that sell any kind of fur or leather products to United States manufacturers or distributors would be excluded from the United States market unless they had laws banning the leghold trap. This would bring pressure on many countries.

Finally, a move of this kind by the United States would serve as a powerful example and stimulus to other countries, such as Canada, to pass similar legislation. NAHL feels that it would be the boulder that starts the avalanche.

Objections from Trappers and Dealers

Shortly after the Broomfield-Bayh bill was introduced, a campaign to prevent its passage was started by trapping and associated business interests. It is understood that they have prepared propaganda against the bill and sent it to members of Congress, newspaper and magazine editors, and businessmen located in states where trapping is important. We have not yet had an opportunity to read any of this propaganda, but can easily surmise its nature.

First, it will be claimed that passage of this bill, and of state laws in compliance with it, would mean the end of the ancient and honorable "sport" of trapping, and hinder the control of wildlife populations. All of the sob stories used by the hunting fraternity to make any attack on hunting appear to be an attack on wildlife and the natural "ecology" will be trotted out.

Secondly, it will be claimed that elimination of the leghold trap would constitute a deathblow to an important source of income for thousands of part and full-time trappers, and for the associated dealer-processor-furrier setup.

Objections Not Valid

Of course, these objections are tommyrot. Nobody would be forced to give up his "sport" or livelihood. The only thing that

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TRAPPING LEGISLATION

would be done is to force these people to use humane methods of trapping, and end the horrible cruelties of the leghold trap.

Once the shift has been accomplished, many trappers would find the humane traps such as the Conibear to be better for them than the leghold. Many beaver trappers who have made the transition, for example, say that the Conibear is better in nearly all respects.

Trappers primarily seeking some particular species might have some cause for dissatisfaction if it is assumed that the humane traps will not be further improved for the trapping of these particular animals. Reference to what has been said about current Canadian efforts to produce a practically universal trap that can be used for taking all fur animals indicates that there is little doubt success will be achieved within the four-year period allowed by the Broomfield-Bayh bill. In fact, passage of the latter will result in breaking down the wall of indifference to efforts to perfect the humane trap for all species. Once the industry realizes that it must get behind the efforts of the humane societies, a crash program will succeed.

In any event, the Conibear trap now available is suitable for trapping the species most commonly taken in the United

States, such as muskrat. It is ready to go now.

This Digest was prepared for Report to Humanitarians by our sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc., a non-profit but not tax-exempt society that is actively working for much-needed humane legislation. The comments contained in this Digest reflect only the viewpoints of NAHL. Humane Information Services takes no part in legislative campaigns, but does wish to keep its members informed about the activities and viewpoints of those who do. If any societies dealing with national legislation wish to provide the readers of the Digest with factual material reflecting a viewpoint different from that of NAHL, that society would be glad to hear from you.

States, such as muskrat. It is ready to go now.

There is one apparently legitimate but not too important objection to use of a killer instead of the leghold trap in the comparatively mild climate of the United States. The animal taken in a killer trap may begin to decompose, and suffer damage to the meat and pelt, unless the trap line is visited more frequently than at present. The suffering of the animal taken by the leghold trap provides, in effect, a substitute for refrigeration of the carcass. The sale of meat from the otherwise unused carcasses in the 1968-69 season brought Louisiana trappers over a million dollars, as compared with six million from the pelts. It would seem to us, however, that the advantages of eliminating "wring-offs" would more than offset the necessity for more frequent visits to the traps required to avoid deterioration of the pelt or if the meat is to be preserved for sale as pet or mink food.

So, trappers are not going to be "ruined" by passage of the Broomfield-Bayh bill. On the contrary, by thus eliminating the greatest source of cruelty in trapping, it may be of substantial benefit to the public image of the industry. When humane societies were urging passage of the federal humane slaughter bill for food animals in 1958, many meat packers fought the bill in just the same way, and from the same background of prejudice and ignorance, as part of the trapping industry now is fighting the Broomfield-Bayh bill. Yet, after the humane slaughter law went into effect, the packers found that it not only saved millions of animals from unnecessary suffering but also reduced costs of operation and labor turnover. Once the Broomfield-Bayh bill is passed into law and becomes operative, the trapping industry will, like the meat packers, wonder why they did not go out for such a law themselves, years ago.

Unjustified opposition of this kind can be effective in preventing passage of the Broomfield-Bayh bill only if the humane movement allows it to go unanswered, and does not get behind this very important bill with all the force it can muster.

Little Support from Humanitarians

The two members of Congress who introduced this bill might well have expected to receive the encomiums of humanitarians everywhere, and active support for their excel-

(Continued in third column)

What You Can Do To Help

Humane societies probably will not take the necessary action unless their members let them know that they demand such support. It is the letters received from members and contributors that largely govern the positions taken by most societies in such matters.

NAHL is urging its members to write to Congressman William S. Broomfield, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515, and to Senator Birch Bayh, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510, thanking them for introducing this important legislation and asking what they can do to help. Also, members are asked to write to their own Congressmen and Senators, same addresses, urging their support. In addition, it would be very helpful to have letters going to members of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce and the Senate Committee on Commerce. You can find the names of members of these committees in the Congressional Directory in your local library. But your own representatives in Congress are the ones who will pay most attention to your re-

quests. NAHL suggests asking them to contact the chairmen and members of the foregoing committees, urging hearings and passage of this bill.

And won't you please send a contri-

but ion to the National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc., 675 Pinellas Point Drive, St. Petersburg, Florida 33705, to be used for the promotion of the Broomfield-Bayh bill and the other important legislation mentioned in this Digest. Or, if you wish your contribution to be tax deductible, send it to Humane Information Services, Inc., 4521 - 4th Street South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33705, which is working on technical matters relating to humane fur procurement.

Imported Meat Legislation

Since the last Humane Legislation Digest, included with Report No. 16, there have been few developments in connection with NAHL's proposed legislation to require that all meat imported into the United States be from humanely-slaughtered animals. The proposed bill still is being considered by influential members of Congress.

Mrs. Christine Stevens, of the Society for Animal Protective Legislation, who has exceptionally good personal relations with members of the House Agriculture Committee, has expressed real interest in the proposal. But she says that "at the present time the House Agriculture Committee has more than it can handle legislatively this year, so I would not recommend seeking introduction of such a bill quite yet; however, the Society for Animal Protective Legislation would be eager to support such a bill at the appropriate time and to work with you to see it enacted into law."

This is the most encouraging development to date. We are happy to have this evidence of eventual support for this very important legislation, and meanwhile will concur in Mrs. Stevens' judgement regarding the desirability of some delay.

LIVESTOCK TRUCKING BILL

Years ago, when nearly all livestock was shipped to market by rail, Congress passed a law regulating the conditions of transport, including a requirement for unloading the animals for rest, water and food on long journeys. The law does not apply to trucks, now used to haul most livestock. Although the majority of truck hauls are for less than 28 or 36 hours, their use has been extended gradually to longer and still longer hauls, with resulting suffering by the closely-confined, jolted animals, subjected (See LIVESTOCK TRUCKING, page 3, column 3)