

SJR

71

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date referred: 5/7/88

FURTHER REFERRALS:

DATE: 5/8/88

The State Affairs Committee has considered SJR 71
Relating to British fur labeling.

RECOMMENDS:

- replace with _____ the same title
- attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

- fiscal impact same as previous fiscal note published 5/4/88
- zero fiscal note same as previous zero fiscal note published _____
- zero with analysis

SIGNING TO PASS:

Cliff Davis
John Ulmer

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

John Ulmer
Chairman's signature

Indigenous Survival International



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For Immediate Release
Contact: Bob Polasky
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April 25, 1988

N E W S R E L E A S E

BRITISH PROPOSAL TO LABEL FURS POSES THREAT TO NATIVE CULTURE

Natives throughout the Circumpolar North dependent on trapping could suffer an economic blow should a proposal by a British Trade Minister be enacted by Britain and spread through Europe.

Animal rights groups have prompted a proposal by British Minister of Trade, the Honorable Alan Clark, to require that all goods from certain species of furs, imported for sale in Great Britain, carry a label indicating that they "may have been taken with the steel-jaw leg-hold trap." Species that would carry the label include wolf, fox and lynx.

The warning label would discourage consumers from buying those products, according to Indigenous Survival International (ISI), an alliance of indigenous peoples of Alaska, Canada and Greenland.

"The Minister's intentions would further animal rights objectives currently aimed at eliminating the market for furs in Europe," says ISI-Alaska staff person, Bob Polasky.

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Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development

"Anti-harvest animal rights groups such as the Animal Welfare Institute see adoption of the British proposal as a major step towards having similar regulations eventually adopted by the European Economic Community (EEC). This would be particularly devastating to people dependent on the fur industry in Canada, which relies heavily on the European market. Thousands of Natives throughout Canada support themselves and their subsistence lifestyle by trapping."

If the proposal is adopted, Alaska would also feel its effects. Furs harvested in Alaska find their way to Europe through Canadian auction houses.

"Alaskans should be concerned about both the immediate and long-term effects of this movement," said Polasky, who, as Subsistence and Natural Resources Director for the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, serves as staff to ISI-Alaska. Animal rights groups were instrumental in the elimination of commercial sealing in 1985, causing severe hardship for Pribilof Islands Aleuts, and an EEC ban on seal skin products has had devastating effects on Inuit Eskimo communities in northwest Canada. Those communities, once self-sufficient, now depend on costly government hand-outs with the predictable result of alarming increases in alcoholism, drug abuse and suicide rates."

The current anti-harvest campaign in Europe, if successful, could stifle efforts in rural Alaska to enhance the fur industry at the local level to provide a more stable

economic base in villages feeling the pinch of the sluggish Alaska economy. Trapping, to supplement subsistence, is one of few economic industries in many rural areas.

In London recently, a delegation of Canadian aboriginal leaders was unable to convince Clark to drop his proposal. Clark claimed strong constituency backing.

Georges Erasmus, ISI-Canada International Co-Chairman and National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, which represents over 500 Indian chiefs, explained that the actions of the Minister caught aboriginal and legitimate conservation groups by surprise. "That the actions of the Minister flies in the face of influential conservation groups such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), (representing over 100 nation states) who recently tersely rejected a similar animal rights group's plans to ban trapping because of the devastating impact that such a ban would have on Native people's renewable resource economies and cultures. The Minister's plans hit aboriginal peoples in full force and will only hurt those who can least afford it." The delegation pointed out that Canada is on the forefront of new trapping technology and developing international conservation standards and that the actions of the Minister will only hinder those developments.

ISI-Alaska, in concert with ISI-Canada and Greenland, is stepping up efforts in opposition of the labeling

proposal, which (after a 28-day public notification and consultation period in Britain) will be debated in Parliament.

An international delegation of indigenous leaders, including ISI-Alaska International Co-Chairman, Matthew Iya, will again travel to London next week to continue efforts to defuse the situation.

In Alaska, ISI is soliciting support of other organizations, State Government and our Congressional Delegation.

"We need to send a strong and united message to Prime Minister Thatcher, Parliament, and Clark, that many Native people's cultural and economic survival is threatened by this action," Polasky said.

The animal rights movement will be a major agenda item at ISI's International Annual Assembly next June at Fort Yukon. Alaska will serve as host for the first time in ISI's four-year history. Hundreds of indigenous peoples from throughout Alaska, Canada and Greenland are expected to attend.

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Indigenous Survival International



April 21, 1988

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The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher
Prime Minister of Great Britain
10 Downing Street
LONDON, UK
SW1A 2AL

*NOTE: THIS SAME
LETTER WENT TO THE
ATTACHED DISTRIBUTION
LIST.*

Dear Prime Minister:

The economic foundation of thousands of aboriginal peoples throughout Alaska, Canada and Greenland is in jeopardy should the proposal of the British Minister of Trade, the Honourable Alan Clark, be adopted.

Indigenous Survival International, an alliance of the aboriginal peoples of Alaska, Canada and Greenland, is deeply concerned that the Minister's efforts to tag fur products entering the United Kingdom would surely cause enormous hardships to our people. Indigenous peoples have for centuries, and continue today to maintain their livelihood from the land and its renewable resources, in harmony with nature. Their cultural and nutritional dependence on these natural resources cannot be replaced.

The Minister of Trade's proposal could effectively eliminate the market for fur products in the U.K. This would eliminate or greatly reduce the only financial resources many of our Native peoples depend on to support their subsistence way of life. To most, the only alternates would be costly government hand-outs, depriving them of their pride and cultural survival. We cannot adequately express to you the potential misery and human suffering brought on by such cultural deprivation. Suicide, alcoholism, child abuse, loss of identity, esteem, and other serious socially destructive forces emerge when a people are denied their right to continue maintaining their honorable way of life.

Mrs. Prime Minister, there is no group of people who have more respect and care for the animals Mother Nature has provided Native Americans, Canadians, and Greenlanders. That respect is essential to their survival - both culturally and nutritionally.

Imagine the effects on U.K. farmers should they suddenly be denied the opportunity to harvest farm animals. Those disastrous effects are what thousands of aboriginal peoples would face should the anti-fur harvest measures proposed by Minister Clark succeed.

The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher -2- April 21, 1988

We most respectfully urge you to oppose the proposal by the Minister of Trade to label "fur product imports." Please help insure a future for our people and their children.

Most Sincerely,

Benjamin P. Nageak

Matthew Iya

Benjamin P. Nageak and Matthew Iya
Co-Chairmen, ISI-Alaska, USA

cc: ISI-Canada
ISI-Greenland
Rural Alaska Resources Assn.
Tanana Chiefs Conference
Assn. of Village Council Presidents

BPN:MI:ct

The Diocese of The Arctic

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

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The Rt. Hon. Mrs. M. Thatcher
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, England.

Dear Prime Minister:

Amidst your pressing and onerous duties, as an English born Canadian citizen and a Bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada, may I presume upon your time to express my deep concern over news from Great Britain; that is, the likelihood that certain members of your Government are initiating an action which condemns a whole way of life for a large majority of Canada's northern aboriginal people.

As the Bishop of The Arctic, with some nearly forty years of residence in the Northwest Territories, I have lived with and served a people, both Indian and Eskimo (Inuit) who for centuries have survived only because of their relationship to and the harvesting of the animals that inhabited their land and waters. For these people throughout their history lifestyles have certainly undergone changes but, for centuries, always in the colonial relationship they experienced under the British Monarchy and its Governments, no challenge was ever given to their deep cultural affiliation to the land. This affiliation has always and necessarily involved harvesting by both hunting and trapping, the whole industry being given dramatic input by a succession of Europeans who opened up the Canadian Northwest for both exploration and commerce.

The alleged action proposed by your Government to label Canadian fur products in such terms as to stigmatize the labour of the native trapper is viewed by many of us as little short of an act of cultural genocide upon a small minority of people who for so long have held the British monarchy and its Governments in deep respect for their understanding of what life and survival on the most northerly frontier of the Commonwealth really entails; this threatened stance of your Government could prove to be a shattering experience for our people.

My plea, Mrs. Thatcher, is that for the sake of all our harrassed and bewildered native people; at least the British Government will delay any precipitous action on this issue until the entire matter of animal fur harvesting has been exhaustively studied with full input by Canadian native people representatives and indeed until the British people themselves have a greater insight into what the fact of virtually closing down the fur industry would have upon a small but important ethnic group within the Commonwealth.

Yours faithfully,

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: Relating to British Fur Labeling
Sponsor: Senate Finance
Requestor: _____

Agency Affected: _____
BRU: _____
Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

| OPERATING | FY 88 | FY 89 | FY 90 | FY 91 | FY 92 | FY 93 |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| PERSONAL SERVICES | | | | | | |
| TRAVEL | | | | | | |
| CONTRACTUAL | | | | | | |
| SUPPLIES | | | | | | |
| EQUIPMENT | | | | | | |
| LAND & STRUCTURES | | | | | | |
| GRANTS, CLAIMS | | | | | | |
| MISCELLANEOUS | | | | | | |
| TOTAL OPERATING | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - |
| CAPITAL | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - |
| REVENUE | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - |

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| GENERAL FUND | | | | | | |
| FEDERAL FUNDS | | | | | | |
| OTHER | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - | - 0 - |

POSITIONS:

| | | | | | | |
|------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| FULL-TIME | | | | | | |
| P/ RT-TIME | | | | | | |
| TEMPORARY | | | | | | |

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Senate Resource Committee Staff Phone: 4797
Division: _____ Date: _____

Approved by ~~Committee~~: Senator Coghill Date: 5/4/88
Agency: Senate Resource Committee

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