

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 28, 1966

Eight members of the House of Representatives today met with Secretary of Commerce John T. Connor and other representatives of the Department of Commerce to protest controls recently imposed on exports of hides and skins.

At the conclusion of the meeting the four Democrats and four Republicans who met with Secretary Connor sent letters to the House Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Government Operations, urging investigations into certain aspects of the curb on exports.

Meeting with the Secretary were Congressmen John J. Flynt Jr. of Georgia, Stanley L. Greigg of Iowa, Bert Bandstra of Iowa, and Ed Edmondson of Oklahoma, all Democrats, and Mark Andrews of North Dakota, Ben Reifel of South Dakota, Robert Dole of Kansas, and Robert F. Ellsworth of Kansas, all Republicans.

In their meeting with the Secretary, the Congressmen protested that the decision to cut hide exports had been made before cattle producers, slaughterhouse operators and meat packers were heard.

The Congressmen were given figures on rising prices of military footwear, running substantially higher than civilian footwear price increases over the same period. This is the aspect the Congressmen urged the House Committees to investigate.

A text of the letter to the three Committee chairmen follows:

The undersigned met with the Secretary of Commerce, the Undersecretary of Commerce (Mr. Collins), the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Domestic and International Business (Mr. Trowbridge), and two other members of the Secretary's staff, on Monday, March 28, 1966, for the purpose of discussing the recent export controls order on hides and skins.

The purpose of this meeting was to inquire into the reasons for the issuance of such order, and to ask whether representatives of the cattle producers, slaughterhouse operators, and meat packers were given an opportunity to be heard before the decision was made to issue the order.

We had been previously informed that the cattlemen, slaughterhouse operators, and meat packers had not been heard before the decision was virtually complete.

We were shocked to find that the decision was made and the order issued based largely upon ex parte hearings in which shoe manufacturers, leather processors, and tanners were given the only real opportunity to be heard before the decision was made.

No such opportunity was given to authoritative spokesmen of the cattlemen, the slaughterhouse operators, and meat packers.