

Gemini Nominee 1990
Best Documentary, Atlantic Film Festival 1989

PELTS: POLITICS OF THE FUR TRADE

The fur trade is Canada's oldest industry but, in recent years, some people have been questioning the morality of killing animals for fur.

PELTS examines the emotional public relations war that has been raging between the fur industry and its opponents, and takes a look at some of the ethical, environmental, and economic issues raised by the debate.

The film presents the arguments of the opposing sides, as well as the methods they use to win public support, providing the viewer with a unique opportunity to consider all aspects of a very complex and highly charged issue.

(See reverse for more information)

“... a splendid example of thoughtful, well-planned filmmaking.”
John Haslett Cuff, *The Globe and Mail*

“... a thought-provoking primer for the undecided.”
Tony Atherton, *The Citizen*

“An eminently balanced documentary, it is commendable for what may be the fairest treatment yet of this volatile subject.”
Bob Remington, *The Journal*

Director: Nigel Markham
Producer: Kent Martin

56 minutes 20 seconds
Order number: C 0189 103



Printed in Canada

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 PELTS: POLITICS OF THE FUR TRADE

PEELTS

POLITICS OF THE FUR TRADE



From
The National Film Board of Canada
Atlantic Centre

VHS

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PELTS: POLITICS OF THE FUR TRADE

In Europe and North America, anti-fur lobbyists and animal rights activists have spent millions of dollars trying to persuade the public to boycott fur products and to end the fur trade. Their opposition to the fur industry stems from the belief that the killing of millions of animals every year for luxury items, such as fur coats, is morally indefensible.

The fur industry states that no species used for fur coats is endangered and that the animals are killed humanely. They point out that the fur industry is a multi-million dollar business that employs hundreds of thousands of people.

In Canada, native people claim that many northern communities would be irreparably damaged if the fur trade was to collapse. Trapping brings in a substantial proportion of the annual income of many families, decreasing their dependence on costly store-bought food and clothing. Life on the land, and hunting in particular, is central to their culture. They feel they have an understanding of the environment that is far beyond that of their southern urban critics.

The narrator of **Pelts** makes the point that, "Perhaps the way people think about the environment has a lot to do with the environment in which they do their thinking."

In the end, the market will decide the victor. Whether we are witnessing the last days of the powerful fur industry, or whether the animal rights movement is itself a passing fad, will largely depend on who does a better job of swaying public opinion.

SUGGESTED AUDIENCES

General public; environment, native, wildlife groups.

CURRICULUM and STUDY AREAS:

Grade 8 to University; Canadian studies, native studies, history, economics, media literacy, ethics, employment, environment, public relations, social studies

Directed, written
and edited by
Nigel Markham

Cinematography
Mike Mahoney
Nigel Markham
Kent Nason

Sound Recording
John Martin
Arthur McKay
Jim Rillie
Alec Salter

Sound Editor
Antonia McGrath

Narrator
Chris Brookes

Cree Translation
Henry Gull
Bella Petawabano
Buckley
Petawabano

Music
Eric Lemoyne
Roger Lemoyne
Bruce Reid

Re-Recording
Hans Peter Strobl

Producer
Kent Martin

Executive Producers
Shelagh Mackenzie
Germaine
Ying Gee Wong

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

In what ways was the fur trade linked to the economic life of the early colonies? How did it affect native land claims and claims by different European powers?

How do we make decisions about ethical/moral issues, such as using animals for fur, food, and laboratory testing? How do we reconcile eating meat but not wearing fur?

What alternatives to the fur industry are there for native communities? What has been the effect on Newfoundland communities of the end of the seal hunt?

How does the media present the issue? To what extent is the media affected by the work of the different interest groups?

CONTACT GROUPS

Indigenous Survival International, 3rd Floor, 47 Clarence St.,
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9K1

The Fur Institute of Canada, Suite 302, 10 Lower Spadina
Ave., Toronto, Ontario M5V 2Z1

The Fur Bearers, 2235 Commercial Dr., Vancouver, B.C.
V5N 4B6

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA),
215 Lakeshore Boulevard East, Suite No. 211, Toronto,
Ontario M5A 3W9.

RELATED NFB FILMS

Politics of Persuasion (29:35) C 0182 088

Cree Hunters of Mistassini (57:53) C 0174 001

The Other Side of the Ledger: An Indian View of the Hudson's Bay Company (42:22) C 0172 067

The Arctic: Our Common Responsibility (26:40) C 0185 056

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