

Legislation to Ban—

'Soring' of Horses

Legislation by Senator John V. Tunney, D-Calif., to ban "soring" of horses, the practice of applying chemicals to horses' hooves and pasterns to achieve certain gaits, was approved by the Senate Oct. 9.

Tunney said that unless federal legislation is passed soon, thousands of Tennessee Walking horses will continue to be subjected to soring.

Sen. Warren G. Magnuson, D-Wash., and 17 other senators co-sponsored the legislation.

A similar bill was approved by the Senate last year but died in the House. The Subcommittee on Health and the Environment in the House is presently working on similar legislation.

Despite public outcries against the practice and widespread publicity, Tunney said, the number of sored horses in the show ring has remained steady or increased in the last three years. Eighteen hundred horse shows will be affected by this legislation each year.

Only 400 shows are sanctioned by the Walking Horse industry and these 400 have complied with the original Act of 1970. The non-affiliated shows continue to present many problems.

"When a horse is sored, his hooves and pasterns are subjected to irritants such as oil of mustard. Salt is often rubbed into fine cuts to blister the skin. Heavy logging chains are applied around the burned area, causing ugly sores

"This pain is inflicted to make a show horse's hooves so sensitive that it will bring up its front legs as soon as the feet touch the ground, giving the judges the visual impression of a graceful, high-stepping gait.

"All of this is done in the brutal pursuit of a horse show blue ribbon." Tunney pointed out that the practice is not necessary to promote the prized gait. It can also be achieved by careful and patient natural training over a longer period of time," he said.

There are approximately 41,000 cases pending that are violations of the original Horse Protection Act of 1970.

These cases cannot be prosecuted because of lack of funds or the power to retain equipment or sored horses as evidence. This bill, S. 811, provides for detention of sored horses and forfeiture or seizure of equipment used in violation of the Act.

The bill also places a greater burden on owners, trainers, shippers, judges and managers. Additionally it authorizes \$1 million for enforcement by the Department of Agriculture.

The legislation has the support of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association, the American Horse Protection Association, and the Department of Agriculture, the American Horse Council, and the American Equine Practitioners