

Selling me on selling you

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Some people are vehemently opposed to the seal hunt, while others are quite vocal about lending support to the industry. The seal hunt is one of those things that could come or go without so much as a raised eyebrow.

True, the seal hunt is one of those industries that defines our heritage and culture in a similar way that cod fishing or that most of us don't actually consume any seal products in our daily lives. We only know there's an annual hunt because various outspoken citizens and groups make a big deal out of it every year.

Before you get your knickers all knotted up, think about this. When was the last time you sat down to a feed of flipper? Or popped a seal oil capsule? We actually aren't supporting the hunt (or those who make a living from the annual sale of seal-related products).

That's not to say there aren't people working to change that. The provincial government has given funds to a furrier in an international trade show in Quebec. The government has also provided money to a firm in this province for the purchase in order to process and market their goods.

All that sounds good, but marketing sealskin coats to potential luxury goods purveyors can only go so far. How many thousand dollars on a sealskin coat? Something to consider, especially when most of us don't spend any more than a stretch on a winter jacket.

Perhaps the government might want to also consider funding local artisans and business owners who could design a product more attractive than luxury-brand clothing, but cost substantially less. That way the average citizen might be more inclined to purchase.

As well, if the government is going to fund a company to process and market their seal-related products, why not also fund a campaign in order to create a wide-ranging desire to actually consume seal products? If pork is 'the other white meat,' perhaps 'better than beef' or something along those lines?

There needs to be a clear and concerted effort put in place if seal harvesters, processing plant owners, marketing firms in addition to the government – are going to succeed in convincing the average citizen to actually purchase and consume seal products.

And only once these products are easily accessible to residents of the province (and elsewhere) can the seal fishery be sustained.

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