

government veterinarian in the country of origin what he must be able to certify. In other cases there are countries from which importation is forbidden because of the disease risk.

**Senator Corbin:** I thought I heard something to the effect that, in spite of these controls being in place, some disease does manage to slip through the border. Of course, you are in a position to control them rather quickly, I would think.

**Dr. Bulmer:** Yes. What you say is possible. We require that, for any animal that is proposed to be imported into Canada, the importer must, first of all, apply to Agriculture Canada for a permit to do so. As Dr. Peart has indicated, we then specify conditions, based on our best knowledge of the risk of disease from that country. We do go through fairly elaborate procedures to determine what that risk would be within any particular country and in any particular species. Then, depending on whether or not that disease is already endemic in Canada, and whether the introduction of, say, one more infected animal would affect that or not, we manage that risk by imposing conditions, which might be tests in the country of origin, with the veterinary officer of that country certifying that the test had been done. Then, if that in itself would not manage the risk, we may impose quarantine after arrival in Canada and perform tests ourselves.

So, depending on the seriousness of any particular disease and our assessment of the risk of it entering via one or another animal, and based on our knowledge of the country's status, we impose various types of conditions. However, as I say, the importer must, first of all, apply for and get a permit to do so.

**Senator Corbin:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

● (1650)

**Senator Petten:** Can you tell us, Dr. Brightwell, where we are as far as electronic tagging is concerned? Do we have the wherewithal to start that now, once this bill is passed, or are we a year or two away from that?

**Dr. Brightwell:** We learned that there are electronic transponders being used now in animals' ears, in the form of clips, or on neck tags, which are used to go through machines that indicate the amount of feed an animal requires. There are a variety of forms of electronic clips or tags.

The most practical method of doing that is to embed one in the animal so that it stays with the animal for life, and not migrate—we have learned that migration of the transponders is a problem—but that has not yet been perfected. The cost has not been brought down to a reasonable level, which would probably be \$2 per animal, or, better yet, 50 cents per animal.

We are a few years away from the time when we could, in fact, have a general type of animal identification tag with one method.

Have I covered that adequately, Dr. Bulmer?

**Dr. Bulmer:** I believe so. What we have been told by the Holstein Association of Canada, which has been actively involved in this area, is that the current cost of an electronic device embedded subcutaneously, or simply attached to the animal, is approximately \$8 a unit. That might be fine for a

valuable animal, but for some of the Holstein bull studs that is adequate.

If you want to have a national system, then as Dr. Brightwell said, you would not want to legislate that type of cost on a unit basis. Perhaps 50 cents would be more realistic, although that could be subsidized by the government if it were mandatory.

**Senator Frith:** How much are the current tags?

**Dr. Bulmer:** A few cents each.

We are probably within a few years of electronic tagging. The Holstein Association of Canada speculates that if, in fact, there is continued support for the development, the volume of production in a few years will bring the price down to a more realistic level.

**The Chairman:** If there are no further questions, and before I read the clauses, I would express the thanks of honourable senators to Dr. Brightwell and his officials.

**Dr. Brightwell:** Mr. Chairman, may I say that we appreciate the speed with which the Senate has approached both these bills. The officials of the department have been working on these for many years. I have only been associated with these for the past two or three months. They know how important the passage of legislation in this regard is to Canadian agriculture.

**Senator Frith:** I hope the parliamentary secretary will mention to his colleagues that we are not always a bad lot.

**The Chairman:** Shall clause 2 carry?

**Senator Frith:** I move that all remaining clauses carry, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Shall all remaining clauses carry?

**Hon. Senators:** Carried.

**The Chairman:** Shall the title carry?

**Hon. Senators:** Carried.

**The Chairman:** Shall the short title carry?

**Hon. Senators:** Carried.

**The Chairman:** Shall I report the bill without amendment?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Honourable senators, the sitting is resumed.

## PLANT PROTECTION BILL

### REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Hon. Gerald R. Ottenheimer:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole, to which was referred the Bill C-67, to prevent the importation, exportation and spread of pests injurious to plants and to provide for their control and eradication and for