

Affairs or should it be the Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs?

So far as our domestic food producing animals are concerned, the Committee on Agriculture would be ideal. But when we think of fish, seals and the wild animals of our forests, we naturally think of the Committee on Fisheries and Forestry. With regard to research animals for laboratories and medical student training as well as household pets, it would seem that this aspect could well be handled by the Health, Welfare and Social Affairs Committee.

As the hon. member for Lanark and Renfrew (Mr. McBride) has already mentioned, when we think of the cruelty to animals aspect of this motion and the Criminal Code application, the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs may well appear to be the best standing committee.

I believe the subject of humane treatment of animals is of increasing concern to more Canadians. I suppose this is natural since our country has moved from a pioneer frontier society, first to an agricultural society and, finally to an urban society. Indeed, I heard recently that within a very few years some 80 per cent of our population will be living in an urban type society. At the same time, the number of fishermen and trappers decreases every year in Canada because this is a very difficult occupation.

● (5:40 p.m.)

The great interest taken in the seal hunt in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is a good example of the amount of public interest which can be generated in this subject by extensive publicity in the press and television. I visited the Gulf of St. Lawrence a couple of weeks ago with the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) to view the over-all scene and we saw a good example of what happens there each year. The activities in the gulf are only a relatively small part of the total seal hunt, much of which takes place in the area known as "The Font", nearer Newfoundland and Labrador. We found the regulations established by the Department of Fisheries were being followed as closely as humanly possible by the seal hunters. If we relate seal hunting standards to accepted standards when killing other kinds of fur-bearing or food-producing animals, the techniques are humane. Comparable measures are used in slaughter houses, and to kill other fur-bearing animals across our land. The animal is stunned to unconsciousness, then bled so that it never regains consciousness. But can we really justify the seal

#### *Animal Treatment Study*

hunt because it compares favourably in certain respects with techniques used to slaughter food-producing animals?

The age of electronics changes all this. When the slaughter of young seals is shown in the nation's living rooms on colour television right after dinner, the spectacle appears repulsive. Is it all the fault of the press? Should we ban the press? A free press is the cornerstone of our democratic process in Canada. One of my hon. friends suggests we use the same techniques on the press as on the seals, but I do not think that would be practicable, Mr. Speaker.

One of our problems is that society in Canada is changing. The main question the hon. member's proposed committee would have to study is this: what are our accepted norms of humane treatment of animals in Canada in 1969? Where do we draw the line between what is acceptable to the urbane, sophisticated city-dweller and the trapper in the northern regions of Canada or the seal hunter on "The Front" off the coast of Newfoundland?

With regard to the treatment of pets and animals used for research, much of the work which the motion envisages a committee might do has already been carried out by the Canadian Council on Animal Care. This council was established in January, 1968 in line with a recommendation of a report on the care of animals used for experiments drawn up by a special committee of the National Research Council. The report was published in June of 1966 and the Canadian Council on Animal Care is attempting to implement the recommendations contained in the National Research Council report. The council is made up of representatives from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Association of Canadian Medical Colleges and of the granting bodies supporting research which utilizes animals, as well as government departments and the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. I believe these people are well qualified to look into questions which the hon. member's motion suggests are suitable subject for inquiry by a committee of the House of Commons.

The objective of the Canadian Council on Animal Care has been to develop guiding principles for the care of animals used in experiments. I have in my hand a publication put out by the Canadian Council on Animal Care, entitled "Care of Experimental Animals, A guide for Canada". In addition to setting out standards of housing and care for animals