

use of the meat inspection legend on between 85 or 90 per cent of meat products marketed in Canada and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, our emphasis on the proper handling of the meat we consume in this country goes back even further. In fact, 200 years earlier, in 1707 to be exact, the French Government in Canada had adopted a ruling that controlled the slaughter of animals, both from the point of view of production and animal health. It is therefore clear that the Canadian Government and the authorities that preceded it before 1867 have had an ongoing concern for both meat production and animal health.

Mr. Speaker, today, in 1985, we are not going to criticize our present meat inspection system. It has already passed the test of time, and I do not think anyone will deny that. However, it is also clear that Agriculture Canada should continue to increase and upgrade the protection Canadian consumers need.

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-33 will also put us in a better position to meet the very strict standards set by our various trading partners across the world. This is a very important point when we consider that annually, export sales of meat produced in Canada generate more than three quarters of a billion dollars. Since competition in this sector is often fierce, it is imperative to maintain the highest possible standards for quality and quality control.

Mr. Speaker, it is not enough to introduce regulations to ensure high health standards. The legislator must also close several legal loopholes so that our courts can deal with businesses and individuals, small though their number may be as we have seen in the past, who would otherwise be able to take advantage of such situations with almost complete impunity.

Stricter controls will not only provide a higher standard of hygiene for our domestic products but, as far as foreign imports are concerned, will also make it possible to deny entry of or to destroy, meat and meat products that are tainted or do not meet Canadian standards. Bill C-33 would also provide for charging a fee for the inspection of imported meat and meat products upon entry into this country and if necessary, for re-inspection once the products have reached registered establishments. Protection of the federal meat inspection legend will discourage misuse of this guarantee of fitness for human consumption. It will help reinforce the credibility of the inspection system and further protect the consumer, which is one of the principal aims of this legislation.

Other provisions have been made in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. From now on, a search warrant will be required to inspect residential premises, and the police must be present if force must be used. The Bill provides that the requirements for humane slaughter of animals will apply to all establishments that are federally licensed. Mr. Speaker, at the present time, standards for humane slaughter must be met only when the meat or meat products are to be sold on international or interprovincial

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markets. One of the provisions of Bill C-33 will make it possible to withhold from slaughter animals affected by chemical, antibiotic or other substances that could make the meat and meat products unfit for human consumption. Finally, Mr. Speaker, the proposed legislation does not provide for any increase in our present inspection services and will therefore not involve additional expenditures.

If we consider the body of legislation being proposed, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that it is mainly a matter of updating legislation that has been on the books for nearly 80 years and is extremely important. Usually, consumers are not often, and probably rarely, concerned about this kind of legislation. The general public depends on the Government and its legislators or the executive authority to monitor the fitness for human consumption of meat and meat inspection and sales both inside and outside the country. People are rarely concerned about this kind of legislation. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, the Government I represent thinks it is important, from time to time, to revise and update legislation that has been on the books for a number of years. This particular legislation, and I think we can rely on the opposition to help us, tends to be more technical. While doing away with a number of legal provisions, we want to update a piece of legislation that is important and continue to provide the assurance—and that is probably the most important aspect of this Bill—that Canadian consumers can continue to rely on existing services. Other types of legislation and other announcements made in this Parliament since last November have reflected the Government's will to reduce its spending and to ensure that the Government can also, to a certain extent, recover the costs—

● (1200)

**Mr. Boudria:** By charging exorbitant fees!

**Mr. Blais:** Yes . . . When my hon. friend, the Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria) refers to exorbitant, he must be referring to the deficit we were left by the previous administration, and I agree wholeheartedly. Indeed, to reduce the exorbitant deficit we now have to cope with, we must take very stringent measures to control the deficit and Government spending.

Mr. Speaker, I said a few minutes ago that this legislation will certainly not increase Government spending, and that we must give the Canadian public and Canadian consumers the assurance that meat inspection in Canada, both for the domestic and the foreign market, will be carried out, without having to increase costs. I think this is a very important guarantee. I see that my hon. friend from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell is dying to intervene. He will have a chance to do so in a few minutes. Mr. Speaker, because of the foregoing considerations, I urgently recommend that the second reading stage of the Meat Inspection Bill be adopted as quickly as possible.