

pests without creating undue interference in transportation and marketing of agricultural and forestry products.

The proposed act also contains provisions that enable the department to respond more effectively and efficiently to plant pest outbreaks by declaring places as infested. The process of declaring places to be infested and the powers of the minister and inspectors in this action have been carefully spelled out. As well, inspectors will be able to restrict the movement of persons or things which could spread a pest from an infested place.

The amendments also update and simplify legal requirements. For example, the penalties for contravening the act have been restructured to make them more effective. New penalties include ticketing for minor offences those who might care to plead guilty to such infractions. This provision will eliminate the need to go through lengthy and expensive court proceedings.

The proposed act also clarifies the conditions under which the department will pay compensation and how people can appeal compensation claims.

Bill C-67, honourable senators, does not just focus on finding ways to control or eradicate plant pests in Canada, it also includes provisions to keep plant pests from ever reaching our shores in the first instance.

Two sections of the proposed act deal with this area and those cases where the department has reasonable grounds to believe that goods destined for Canada may be infested. Officials will be authorized to carry out inspections at the place of origin prior to shipment. As well, we will be working with other countries to help them improve their plant pest control and eradication systems. In fact, the act authorizes the department to provide financial aid and technical expertise to foreign countries.

● (1550)

Two other clauses in the bill provide the Minister of Agriculture with the authority to require the operators of land, air, rail, and sea terminals to allocate, if required, at no cost to the Crown, space and facilities to provide the necessary services to properly administer this bill. Other benefits of the legislation allow for recovery of the cost of program delivery from those who directly benefit from some activities administered under this bill. Those activities include conducting inspections and issuing permits and other documents to those who import and export plants and plant products. Fumigation, treatment, and quarantine of such items will also be cost recoverable.

In summary, honourable senators, this bill demonstrates Canada's commitment to prevent the spread of plant pests, which is of economic importance to our global trading partners. This will mean improved international market opportunities for Canadian plants and plant products. Our plant-based industries rely heavily on our plant protection programs. Bill C-67 will not only ensure the continuance of this protection but will also enhance it.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Dan Hays:** Honourable senators, the remarks of Senator Nurgitz were complete and describe the improvement and advance in legislation dealing with plant protection. I have not had a lot of time to review the legislation or the background information on it, but from what I have read I think it is worthy of support, and it would be my intention to support the bill and do everything I can to ensure the speedy passage and implementation of this legislation.

I suppose one criticism would be order, however. It is something that we have seen a great deal of recently, that being the government's preoccupation with user pay. It seems to me that the intent of this legislation and those things that will be looked after as a result of it benefit not only users in the plant or new variety development area but all Canadians. As in the past, it seems to me that that is a cost that is properly borne by all Canadians.

I gather that we will have an opportunity, either in Committee of the Whole or in committee, to ask some questions with respect to this legislation. I will conclude with those remarks.

**Hon. Eymard G. Corbin:** Honourable senators, I would like to put a question to Senator Nurgitz. To what extent have these legislative proposals been discussed with producer groups? I ask this because of a strong and violent reaction to some of the proposals contained in this bill in past years. Can we now say that producer groups now have a better understanding of what this legislation proposes to accomplish and that the bill has their general support?

**Senator Nurgitz:** In response to Senator Corbin's question, I wish I could be more specific, but I would merely ask him to hang on for a short period of time. I hope that later today we will be in Committee of the Whole where a witness or witnesses will be able to provide the precise answer to that question with respect to the nature of that consultation.

**Senator Corbin:** I suppose I should have gone back to the House of Commons record, but were the hearings extensive? Were all of these people given ample opportunity to express their views?

**Senator Nurgitz:** I do not think there were extensive hearings with respect to these bills.

**Senator Phillips:** Were they expensive?

**Senator Nurgitz:** My whip wanted to know if they were expensive hearings.

**Senator Doody:** Once a Tory, always a Tory!

**Senator Nurgitz:** I did not misunderstand Senator Corbin when he asked if there were extensive hearings. Again, I would refer Senator Corbin to Dr. Brightwell, who will be appearing shortly.

Motion agreed to and bill read second time.

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?