

Research on Treatment of Animals

tives committee on animal care in 1965. He used these words, which I think strike home:

There is a degree of pain which no human being has a right to inflict on an animal no matter what increase in knowledge might be expected to result.

I agree with that and that is why I support so strongly the Council for Laboratory Animals. In the previous debate on October 26 we heard of another very fine organization, the Canadian Council on Animal Care. But as the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway pointed out, the Canadian Council on Animal Care deals with animal husbandry, whereas it is the Council for Laboratory Animals which is dealing specifically in an area where apparently at the moment there appears to be no real effective law, namely, the welfare of animals while they are undergoing experimentation.

In the brief time at my disposal I would like to place on record a submission which was made to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) by the Council for Laboratory Animals as recently as the beginning of this year. It is very short, just one page, but it says a lot of things that need to be said and I think to place it on record in *Hansard*, which has such wide distribution, is the best possible use I can make of my time in bringing my remarks to a close so that a vote can be taken on the motion. It reads:

It is now some seven years since the Council for Laboratory Animals first drew the federal government's attention to the unsatisfactory treatment of research animals in Canada.

During the last three years considerable progress has been made in improving the housing and husbandry of laboratory animals in Canadian universities. The Canadian Council on Animal Care, set up at the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada in 1966 with National Research Council financing, has been active in encouraging the universities to upgrade the 70 per cent of animal facilities which were rated as inadequate at the time of the original survey. Animal care committees have been established at most universities, and steps taken to raise the standards of training of laboratory technicians responsible for the animals.

• (5:50 p.m.)

The Canadian Council on Animal Care has not, however, been given the responsibility of reviewing experimental procedures and this represents a major gap in the protection afforded to laboratory animals. The medical journals report considerable numbers of Canadian experiments involving pain or stress to animals each year, some of which appear, on the face of it, to be of doubtful value in relation to the suffering involved, and we attach a short list of examples to indicate the wide variety of experiments in which animals are used.

Here we come to the meat of this submission, Mr. Speaker.

We believe that, just as the private individual is required under the Criminal Code to justify the infliction of suffering on an animal, so the scientist should be ready to justify painful experiments before a competent body. We suggest, therefore, that the staff of the Canadian Council on Animal Care be expanded to include a small, but highly qualified, inspectorate of medical and veterinary scientists who would review proposals for experiments approved by university animal care committees and the subsequent reports of these experiments.

It would be the duty of the inspectorate to ensure that unjustified or excessively painful experiments were not conducted; that the statistical minimum number of animals required were used, and that suffering was reduced, wherever possible, through appropriate methods of anaesthesia, analgesia and euthanasia. The inspectorate would also examine every possibility of substitut-

[Mr. Groos.]

ing one or another of the increasing number of techniques in which animals are not required, in place of the time honoured, but generally less reliable, methods of experimentation and testing on animals.

I should like to speak at greater length on that aspect of the matter, Mr. Speaker, but time is pressing.

The work of the inspectorate would not impede legitimate research in any way, as experiments could proceed on receipt of initial approval by the local university animal care committee—

One of the primary tasks of the inspectorate would, in fact, be to advise and assist scientists in the use of humane techniques, but in the event that a scientist deliberately disregarded the recommendations of the inspectorate, the granting bodies would be advised to take note of the fact in respect to future grant requests.

One province has already recognized the need to exercise a measure of control over experimentation through legislation which requires that "every animal used in a research facility in any experiment that is likely to result in pain to the animal shall be anaesthetized so as to prevent the animal from suffering any unnecessary pain." Supervision of experimentation requires, however, a high degree of scientific and veterinary expertise and it makes little sense, financially or administratively, to establish separate inspectorates in each province for this purpose, when a small but highly qualified federal inspectorate, in close touch with the national granting bodies, could handle the job more effectively and at considerably less expense.

We suggest, therefore, that the federal government take steps: (1) to provide permanent funding for the inspectorate of the Canadian Council on Animal Care in order to ensure its continuity and (2) to make the inspectorate responsible to the Minister of Agriculture rather than to the institution whose facilities it is required to supervise. The council would then become advisory to the minister and its membership could be expanded to include a higher proportion of persons concerned with the interest of animals.

If the inspectorate was placed under the aegis of the federal Minister of Agriculture, it could also take over the inspection of federal government institutions engaged in animal research and testings, and of those pharmaceutical companies conducting research with animals which sell their products to the federal government or its agencies.

Under the above proposals, while the university animal care committees would retain their local autonomy, every phase of animal use in all fields of Canadian research and testing would be brought under centralized supervision, with its attendant advantages of uniformity of application, high quality of personnel and administrative economies.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I repeat that this submission was prepared by the Council for Laboratory Animals in Vancouver, British Columbia, and was submitted to the Minister of Justice in January, 1971. I have no hesitation whatsoever in placing it on record because I think it lends support to a portion of this motion of the hon. member for Vancouver East, from the far west, and I leave it now to the decision of this chamber.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Question.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Isabelle (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing for some time quite interesting discussions on animals used for research purposes. I do not wish to rise without paying a tribute to the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) who introduced that motion, because I know that he is a dedicated man and a