

Government Orders

that other animals at the farm do not spread the disease. The department will be given the authority to conduct surveys to help determine if a disease is present and the extent of economic loss that results from an outbreak. Statistics on animals will be readily available.

The new act also recognizes that disease and pests can enter Canada indirectly. Garbage generated on international ships entering Canadian waters or on aircraft landing on Canadian soil presents a serious risk of introducing animal diseases. The new legislation will continue to ensure that garbage is properly handled and disposed of when it is discharged on our shores. The department has new powers to control animal disease vectors: insects or other animals that can carry disease from one organism to another.

One new section in the Health of Animals Act specifically empowers the department to dispose of vectors. Another section provides for regulations to control importing and exporting vectors and also specifies the method of treating, destroying and separating them from healthy animals.

One of the weaknesses of the current act is that necessary controls are assumed or are simply not clear. Now the obligations and duties of anyone handling animals and their products, including diseased cultures, are written in more detail and in a style that is readily understandable.

Amendments also update and simplify legal requirements. The penalties for contravening the act have been updated. The new penalties include ticketing for minor offences. This procedure is similar to that of a police officer handing out tickets for traffic violations and avoids the current procedure of having the accused appear before a judge, even if the accused is pleading guilty.

The revised act protects the rights of individual citizens as guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. An inspector may not enter a dwelling place without the occupant's consent or without a warrant issued by a magistrate. The powers of the Governor in Council, the minister and inspectors have

also been recast to ensure they are compatible with the charter.

The new act is the culmination of experience. All public and private groups directly affected by this legislation have been consulted. Provincial governments, the departments of the environment, revenue, and health and welfare, the trade negotiations office, industry, and interested members of the public had input into the contents of this bill. All agree that amendments are necessary, and all continue to support the principles of this bill.

The Health of Animals Act has several benefits. Agriculture Canada will be better able to control animal diseases. The department will be sensitive to changes in technological and trade practices and thus react reasonably to them.

The department will be able to enforce the act and its regulations, ensuring that there are few infractions. It will be possible to recover costs for certain services and programs. The department will be ensuring the rights of individual citizens as required by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Amendments to this legislation reaffirm the government's commitment to safe and healthy livestock. The act has been revised to clarify responsibilities, reinforce controls, and take into account modern technology. This bill ensures that our animal industries, so vital to this nation's well-being, will be successful in the competitive world markets for animals and their product.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-66 which is an upgrading of the Health of Animals Act. However, I have some concerns that I want to make very clear at this time.

First, once again the government is pulling away some of the support systems to the Canadian agricultural industry. It is bringing in a user-pay concept in terms of inspections that cannot be added to the costs of the animals when sold. Individuals who reside within a five-kilometre area of a herd being placed under quarantine may have to go through a series of blood testing or other tests to examine whether or not their herd is infected with tuberculosis or any other diseases that are prevalent in livestock, particularly in cattle: tuberculosis, brucellosis, or even a recent outbreak in Britain that has created panic throughout the livestock industry. They