

Animal Treatment Study

has placed before us a motion which is very important though very wide in scope. It is sort of an omnibus motion which involves many areas of concern and therefore will be of much interest to many members.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on that notice of motion.

I want to congratulate the hon. member for taking the defence of animals, which, incidentally are not represented directly in the house. However, a few thoughts come to my mind on that subject.

It is very praiseworthy to care a lot for animals. Indeed, everybody likes animals. If certain individuals are led to mistreat animals, we can conclude that they are abnormal, for an instinct feeling leads man to like them.

But we should not make a major discussion out of the question. It seems to me it would be displacing the human values, for if life was made so that animals can serve man, be it in the field of food, or research, or sports, it follows that if we push the protection of animals too far, we would have to give up eating meat, hunting or fishing, as well as pursuing scientific research.

I do not think that conscientious scientists, hunters or consumers enjoy ill-treating animals for the fun of it. There may be cases of cruelty but they are already provided for in the law.

But when such a question is raised, I think of how little importance we attach sometimes to this superior animal which is man himself, especially at a time when the house is considering the famous omnibus bill which has for object to legalize killing the foetus. In my opinion, it is a confusion of values.

How is it that so little respect is shown for the embryo of the human being, and so great a concern for the protection of animals?

The comparison perhaps is odious, but still these are facts. Is it possible that we have no scruples about passing a legislation which will make abortion legal while at the same time we are discussing the protection of animals?

I think it is high time that we awake to the necessity of protecting the most perfect animal of all creation, which is man. He must be ensured the respect which is owed to every human being because of his intelligence

[*Mr. McBride.*]

as well as because of his body. I believe proper legislation to ensure protection to this kind of animal, man, has not yet been passed.

Before discussing further this legislation which we are asked to pass, I think we should tarry a little to consider the real problem of the human animal. This is what strikes me in this advice of motion, Mr. Speaker, and I do not think it would be a bad thing to stop a moment and think this over. We should not go too far. We all agree that animals have to be protected adequately, as is proposed in the notice of motion; we should not think, however, as they do in India, that some cows are sacred. We know what was the result there of such a belief.

We have to follow the scale of values set by God. However, animals which are there to serve man, must be given some measure of respect. But, most important of all, the human being has to be respected.

I think there would be no reason not to endorse that legislation, but I simply want to emphasize the fact that we have every reason to protect the human being.

I wish to point out in particular the relation between this bill and the other one on abortion, which, as far as I am concerned, pays no attention to the human being and to life.

We do not object to that motion, but I think every effort should be made to protect the most perfect animal of the whole created world, that is, man.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, this motion of the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) envisages the establishment of one of the standing committees of the House of Commons as a committee to inquire into practically every facet of the treatment of animals in Canada, including not only our domestic animals and household pets but also wild animals, birds and fish. It might be well to include the much maligned creature homo sapiens.

Mr. Winch: He can look after himself; the animals cannot.

Mr. Foster: As the hon. member has suggested, when he originally introduced this motion in 1966 or 1967 there was some discussion concerning the committee to which this matter should be referred. Should it be the Committee on Agriculture? Should it be the Committee on Fisheries and Forestry? Should it be the Committee on Justice and Legal