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There is a tremendous opportunity in Atlantic Canada for a major impetus to food production. Canada itself is very much an underdeveloped country. If it is not underdeveloped, it is fast becoming underdeveloped in so far as food production is concerned. We cannot even feed ourselves much less engage in the export of food on a large scale. We as a country import something like \$4 billion of agricultural goods year. That is equivalent, according to the experts, to one out of two meals.

The situation in agriculture per se is paralleled by that in fisheries. The world demand for fish has not diminished, but the supply has dramatically diminished. This is another opportunity for the Atlantic region to become a food basket for the rest of the world. The Maritime Farmers' Council has made a commitment to itself and to the country to triple agricultural production over the next 15 to 30 years. The goal is to help make the region self-sufficient in food production, with enough surplus to enable the Atlantic region to become a net exporter of food as well.

The Atlantic regional veterinary college that I am proposing today in my private member's motion is essential in that over-all strategy, because it can play an important role in encouraging and stimulating production efficiency in animal agriculture and in farming of marine species—or aquaculture as it is called—throughout the four Atlantic provinces.

I would like now to talk about the particular role I have in mind for the Atlantic regional veterinary college. A couple of examples are obvious. The first example which I wish to mention is that of preventive medicine. Traditionally veterinary medicine has been geared toward "salvage practice", as it is called in the profession, or concentration on sick animals. More and more, however, the direction of veterinary medicine is toward improving the general level of health of the animal population. In other words, the emphasis is on prevention.

In the United States the total value of livestock and poultry exceeds \$35 billion. The estimated losses from animal diseases is \$3 billion in that country. Disease in cattle alone results in a \$1 billion loss per year. Swine losses are over \$800 million or 20 per cent of the gross income of swine breeders. A similar situation exists in Canada, particularly in the Atlantic provinces. The goal should be to reduce waste. It is estimated that 12 to 15 per cent of every dollar spent on food production is wasted because of disease. This is an area where a veterinary college could play a vital role in assisting the Atlantic region to become more efficient and more productive as it strives toward the goal of food self-sufficiency.

Moving on from agriculture for a moment to fisheries, the goal of improved husbandry in fisheries and in other marine life is relevant to veterinary medicine. Unfortunately, the tools for the prevention, the control, and the eradication of fish diseases are still very few in the Atlantic region, throughout the rest of Canada and, indeed, in many parts of the world. The Atlantic regional veterinary college would give a huge boost to the fisheries industry by strengthening this area of weakness.

Atlantic Veterinary College

We need to improve harvesting techniques in fisheries. We also need to improve diversification of production, quality control, marketing, modernization of handling methods and professional training. The marine aspects of the proposed college are among the most unique and futuristic parts of the plan, and they are a vital part of the rationale or the justification for an Atlantic regional veterinary college. The recent establishment by Canada of a 200-mile offshore limit makes fisheries all the more economically significant and the proposal which we are debating today all the more relevant.

Quite apart from the offshore fisheries is the question of fish farming. In the next ten to 15 years this area could have a major economic impact. In some countries, such as the United States, fish farming has surpassed the offshore catch of some of the main species of food in a period of less than five to six years. In all those ways which I have mentioned, and in others which I did not, veterinary medicine could play a key role in training, direct service, research, extension and continuing education.

The college would not only be for the benefit of the people directly involved in the food industries, the farmers and fishermen, but also for the benefit of agrologists, veterinarians, biologists and many others, in fact, everyone involved in food production. The Atlantic regional veterinary college could become a vital ingredient in the economic infrastructure of the whole area.

I would like to talk for a moment about a specific dimension of the problem which we have at hand. Despite the importance of veterinary medicine to the Atlantic provinces, the region is not now directly served by a veterinary college. It is the only region of Canada which is not directly served by such a college. At present, there are three colleges. One is the Ontario Veterinary College at Guelph, the only English-speaking veterinary college in eastern Canada. The second college is the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at Saskatoon, on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan. The third is the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Saint-Hyacinthe in the province of Quebec.

Each is a regional school. These colleges have a national role, but essentially they are designed to serve their respective regions. The Western College of Veterinary Medicine, for example, serves British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Its operating costs are met by all four provinces, just as all four contributed to the capital costs originally. That particular college does not accept, as a general rule, although there are exceptions, students from outside the region. The same is true, to a lesser extent, of Guelph and Saint-Hyacinthe.

The Guelph veterinary college has an unwritten quota of something like six students for the Atlantic region. It is the only English-speaking veterinary college in eastern Canada. Yet it accepts only six students each year from my region. No wonder there is a dire need for vets in Atlantic Canada, in private practice, in government and in teaching. In 1975 the number of vets per 100,000 in the Atlantic region was 7.81. In the rest of Canada the corresponding figure was 14.45. The number of students entering a veterinary program per million