

If that cannot be accomplished, Agriculture Canada should consider establishing designated animal importation stations fully manned by Agriculture Canada inspection staff. These stations should be established at points which currently handle most of the animal traffic into the country.

I think this goes without saying. I know that my hon. friend, the Minister of National Revenue, is concerned about improving the flow of traffic across our borders. He has indicated a number of potential improvements and this would be one that ought to be considered with that because we do not want to have diseased animals entering the country.

There is a whole set of other recommendations. I think I have made the point that when it comes to transportation of livestock across our provincial or international borders there are obvious improvements that ought to be made.

The legislation is receiving our support because it provides authority for a national identification system for animals for the purpose of determining the presence of and controlling or eradicating of animal diseases. That is fundamental and it is for that reason we want to see this bill proceed expeditiously.

It also establishes an authority to provide assistance to other countries in order to control or eradicate animal diseases. We have already heard today concerns about the importation of diseased animals from other countries using the indirect routing of livestock. While we might prohibit animals coming in from a certain country, if they are detoured via another port, it is sometimes impossible to regulate that. We are concerned about that for obvious reasons.

The legislation will allow recovery for the cost of inspection, treatment and other services previously provided free. I think we have to revisit this whole concept. Obviously, the government is trying to introduce a user-pay process. That certainly has merit and at first glance people will say it makes sense. However, if we are going to expect people to co-operate fully in attempting to eradicate livestock diseases, we do not want to place roadblocks in their way. We want to encourage them to come forward and participate in these eradication programs. We have to determine whether assigning extra

Government Orders

charges or fees would discourage people from taking this matter as seriously as they should.

There are a number of other items in the legislation that are equally significant. I think I have said enough in terms of the major portions of the legislation and the reasons we want to support it.

I want to conclude by saying that this legislation does allow for greater flexibility in terms of controls when it comes to transportation of animals. We have been approached by a number of animal welfare groups which are concerned about the cutbacks in inspectors to enforce the transportation provisions of the act. They are concerned about abuses with regard to the length of time animals spend in transit and about the lack of removal of cattle that have deceased enroute. When this bill gets to committee we will have an opportunity to raise these critical issues to representatives of the government.

This is major housekeeping, long overdue. It addresses some of the major issues with which we have been concerned. We have some concerns, but they can be dealt with appropriately once the legislation goes to committee.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, this is not a topic of which I know very much. I will make that admission.

The lack of inspectors at border crossings is a concern of mine as well. At the steel mill in Sault Ste. Marie, as a result of the lack of inspectors to address the problem, we are assured, even by Revenue Canada, that Third World and European seamless tube is coming into the country. There is a problem in steel and I notice that there is a problem in this area as well. Is this a common problem along many lines where there is just not enough manpower to address situations like this?

Madam Deputy Speaker: As the hon. member knows, I did make a mistake. Normally at second reading the first three speakers do not benefit from the period for question and comments. However, I think we may allow the hon. member to answer his colleague's question.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to my hon. colleague. Obviously, we are all well aware of the problems with seamless tube which he has raised once again. It is a matter that has been raised many times both indirectly and directly in the House. The seamless