

Animal Contagious Diseases

cars, ships or other vehicles. This was not previously carried out. Overcrowding will now be controlled. There are to be more adequate provisions for feeding and watering animals transported by rail across Canada. The maximum number of hours animals can be transported before being unloaded for rest, food and water will be more adequately established. The act will establish guidelines in accordance with the specifications set down for the construction of animal stalls, pens, fetterings, containers, etc., and how they are to be maintained. There are also new provisions for the payment of compensation for hay, straw, fodder, foodstuffs, fertilizer, manure, containers, etc., if they are infected with an infectious disease. The compensation would be at market value.

One of the very few objections I have to Bill C-28 concerns the provision for paying farmers compensation for animals ordered destroyed by the Health of Animals Branch. Section 12(2)(b) provides:

In case of cattle or sheep destroyed pursuant to any area or herd disease eradication program instituted pursuant to the regulations, such maximum amounts will be paid as may be prescribed by the governor in council for pure bred or grade animals minus an amount equal to the value of the carcass, as determined by the minister or a person appointed by him for that purpose.

This clause could cause considerable hardship to farmers if it is not interpreted sympathetically. If a farmer is called upon to suffer considerable loss as a result of disease such as brucellosis and tuberculosis and is forced to destroy all or most of his herd in order to eradicate the disease, his loss could bring him to the verge of total ruin should the compensation he receives be insufficient to replace his herd. I do not think a farmer should have to face losses of any kind when faced with such a problem. He has a hard enough time making ends meet, without having to risk losing his herd.

I believe the Department of Agriculture should take a much harder look at this section with the purpose of treating farmers more equitably in this regard. I am suggesting that a farmer should at least break even, enabling him to recoup his losses at no cost to himself. We should do everything possible to keep farmers producing and on the land. We should not discourage them, as this section could easily do. I urge the department and the Standing Committee on Agriculture to give more consideration to this provision, when it is brought before them for further examination, and to spell out exactly what amount of compensation they have in mind so that we may all know where we stand. The future of many farmers, whether they decide to stay in farming or not, may well depend on it.

One way to handle the problem of compensation equitably would be to pay a farmer replacement value for an animal ordered to be destroyed. Determination of this value would be made on the basis of the age of the animal, its quality and its probable usefulness in a producer's operation. Regard will be paid to the cost of importing new breeds of animals as well as to cross-breed programs involving beef cows and dairy stock. Compensation of this type would mean more flexibility, range and realism in the level of compensation paid. It would also make farmers better inclined to co-operate even more fully with the Health of Animals Branch in animal disease eradication programs, knowing that their personal losses would be

[Mr. Mitges.]

recompensed and that they would be in a position to start again with new herds.

I should now like to say a few words about brucellosis. Brucellosis is an infectious disease of cattle characterized by abortion, retained placenta and infertility. The disease can cause undulant fever in humans and can be contracted if a person drinks raw milk from an infected cow or comes into direct contact with infected material. For many years, the control and elimination throughout the world of communicable animal diseases such as brucellosis has been the goal of the veterinary profession and of the livestock industry. The main reasons for this effort are that such diseases not only cause high economic losses to farmers and to the agriculture industry, but also that many of them, as the minister has pointed out, may be transmitted to man. We are fortunate in Canada that, through the concerted efforts and understanding of our livestock industry and the veterinary profession, Canadian livestock is now free from many of the foreign animal diseases which plague most countries throughout the world.

This is never an easy task, however. The prevention, diagnosis, control and eradication of communicable diseases are always complex because of the many and varied factors associated with their dissemination. When these problems are compounded by the use of vaccines and dependence upon a biological test for diagnosis, eradication becomes even more difficult to achieve. Brucellosis is one of the serious communicable diseases of animals. It has cost the livestock industry of this nation many millions of dollars each year. At the same time, it exposes the human population to undulant fever, causing suffering, misery and high costs in medical treatment and hospitalization. I, for one, am a prime example of that: during my practice I did get undulant fever and had a difficult time getting rid of it.

The obvious manifestation of brucellosis most often results in the abortion of the foetus, together with the decrease or total loss of milk yield of the dam. However, we are sometimes inclined to overlook the losses caused by temporary or permanent sterility and the reduced sale value of cattle in infected herds. In the early 1950s, these losses to the cattle industry in Canada were estimated at well over \$10 million annually when the brucellosis infection rate for cattle was calculated as being between 8 per cent and 9 per cent.

Brucellosis control in Canada was started about 40 years ago in the early 1930s with the introduction of the voluntary brucellosis-free herd program. While the program was effective, primarily in closed pure bred breeding herds, it did little to reduce the national infection level. Therefore, in about 1950, following a national survey which showed an infection rate of almost 10 per cent, it was decided to institute a national program directed in the long term toward eradication of the disease. The first step toward this eradication was the establishment of the federal-provincial calfhood vaccination program. This program was the combined effort of the Department of Agriculture and the provincial departments of agriculture, with the federal department providing the vaccine and the provincial departments carrying on the program.