

to the advantage of the very large centres and the very large processing plants.

We have some difficulty with this Bill since it leaves far more questions than were answered by the Hon. Member who introduced it for the Government. We hope that when we get to committee the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) and his officials will have clear and straightforward answers and will not try to hide and stonewall as sometimes has been the wont of Ministers of Agriculture, both past and present, when appearing before the committee.

● (1230)

Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in the discussion on Bill C-33. The Bill is not as ominous as the two previous speakers have tried to make it out to be. As the Bill states, it is simply an Act respecting the import and export of and interprovincial trade in meat products, the registration of establishments, the inspection of animals in registered establishments, the standards for these establishments and the standards for animals slaughtered and meat products prepared in these establishments. As the Member who spoke previously said, this Bill has been introduced to update some of the other Acts and to put everything under one cover. These Acts include the Meat Inspection Act, the Humane Slaughter of Food Animals Act and the Meat and Canned Foods Act. Most of these regulations have now been brought up to date.

I had the pleasure of working under the old Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act for several years after graduating from the Ontario Veterinary College. As other Members have said, our meat inspection system is the best in the world and I can certainly attest to that. We can rest assured that anything that has the "Canada Approved" stamp on it is respected all over the world.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are two inspection systems in Canada, the federal inspection system and the provincial inspection system. Anything that is exported or goes from one province to another has to have the federal stamp on it. Anything that is used within the province of origin pretty well falls under the meat inspection system of that particular province although there is nothing to prevent a federal meat inspector from also acting in that capacity.

Ante-mortem inspections are carried on by veterinarians at all plants in order to determine whether or not anything peculiar is evident at that time. This prevents the wrong animal from going to slaughter. Quite often, very little is done at ante-mortem inspections and the key role is played when the animals are slaughtered on the killing floors. I can say from the outset that there is a great deal of co-operation received from every person who works in a slaughterhouse or abattoir. All inspectors receive the utmost of co-operation for the simple reason that most of a plant's employees buy their own meat at that plant and they would not want to sell anything that they would not want to eat themselves. Some of those people have worked in abattoirs for 25, 30 or 35 years and they have very

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keen eyesight, to say the least. They were certainly of great help to us when we were inspecting in those plants.

There is nothing in the Act that has anything to do with inspection charges. I read every one of these clauses very thoroughly and none of them deals with that. I do not think that it is quite right to read something like that into Bill C-33. As well, the issue of spot checks was raised. There are no spot checks that take place at the time of the actual slaughter of the animal. Those inspections are done very, very thoroughly under the jurisdiction of a veterinarian with the assistance of primary products inspectors who actually do the knife work. The primary products inspectors are supervised by the veterinarians and they certainly do a very excellent job. They are quite qualified to do what they are doing. It is up to the veterinarian to look at carcasses that have been railed out for some reason or other by the primary products inspectors.

The number of veterinarians employed by the federal Department of Agriculture is in the vicinity of 273 at the last count. They carry an extensive responsibility in assuring that we do have the best inspection system in the world and that our products are very well received. Of course, there are instances when inspectors from other countries will come to Canada just as inspectors from Canada have the right to go to the plants in other countries. Other inspectors come here to make sure that our plants are adequate and we go there to make sure that their plants are adequate before we actually allow the importation of their products into our country.

As I read them, the regulations do nothing more than update the old regulations that have been in existence since almost the turn of the century and, as I mentioned earlier, bring them under one cover so that they can be more easily scrutinized and followed by the professionals in the inspection system under Agriculture Canada.

There is not much more I wish to say except that I welcome these regulations. Certainly they will go a long way toward updating the whole process of the meat inspection system and giving the authority necessary to keep our inspection system on the high level it is at present.

Right now we are short of veterinarians in the public sector both provincially and federally. This is due primarily to the fact that there are not enough graduates from the three veterinary colleges in Canada. Many of those who graduate go into private practice and this makes it very difficult for the Governments to employ them. The new veterinary college that will be opening in Prince Edward Island in the very near future will hopefully alleviate the problem and enable us to fill these more than 100 positions in the federal public sector that are vacant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me these few moments to comment on Bill C-33.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, I understood the Hon. Member to say that he thought that this Bill had nothing to do with the implementation of fees and that it was not necessary as a part of the package to implement the cost recovery program. I wonder if he would care to comment on Clause 20, Subclause (g), in which it is indicated quite clearly that some of the