

who are careless in the use of a motor vehicle. Canadians should be prepared to shoulder the responsibility for better preventive health care. If they do not I suggest that governments will necessarily encourage or even force them to do so.

A few years ago a former minister of national health and welfare said that the cost of health services has risen so rapidly in Canada in recent years that three alternatives are imminent. First, the standard of health care now available can be reduced; or, second, taxes, premiums or deterrent fees could be raised ever higher; or, third, ways must be found to restrain the growth of cost increases through the better operation of the health service structure now in existence.

May I call it ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

### NATIONAL DEFENCE—POSSIBLE OPENING OF SUFFIELD RANGE FOR GRAZING

**Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat):** Mr. Speaker, the topic of my adjournment debate speech relates to the Department of National Defence and to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson), but I hasten to point out that in no way does it relate to current Lockheed aircraft contracts. It relates to the minister's ultimate decision that grazing should not be permitted in 1976, and possibly for several years thereafter, in the Suffield PFRA community pasture near Medicine Hat, Alberta.

In my question to the minister of last February 17 I suggested that this decision means that approximately 5,000 head of breeding cattle will have to find new pastures in the coming months, or be put on a badly depressed cattle market. New pasture arrangements at this late date are almost impossible to arrange. Therefore the market alternative will very likely be chosen—not a pleasant prospect.

● (2200)

I am convinced the minister received very bad advice that originated from environmental, wildlife and fish and game interests in Alberta, both federal and provincial agencies, which in turn advised the Suffield base commander that grazing should cease. In accepting this questionable advice from his Suffield staff, the minister has chosen to ignore and reject a very well prepared and practical report with recommendations from PFRA who, of course, report to the minister's colleague, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Lessard).

I submit most sincerely that wildlife and fish and game enthusiasts are not practical agronomists and, further, that no authority on this continent is more knowledgeable and competent on this subject than Alex Johnston and Silver

### *Adjournment Debate*

Smoliak of the federal research station at Lethbridge, the Alberta department of lands range management staff, and especially the staff of PFRA in Regina, particularly Dr. Bob Lodge and Walter Thompson.

PFRA have been managing many pastures over all of western Canada for almost 40 years. I have personally watched them perform. They are exceedingly competent managers and, further, are well aware of the need for conservation and environmental respect.

The recommendation of PFRA respecting this Suffield pasture is that the terms of reference that relate the use of this pasture only to "emergency drought conditions" are entirely unsatisfactory, and that the Suffield pasture should operate on a permanent basis. Improved and permanent stock watering conditions can only be developed under such terms. It is only in the vicinity of the present less than adequate water holes that there is some over grazing. This is normal during the months of August and September when our native grasses ripen, growth stops, and the brittle grasses are subject to tramping around cattle water holes.

The 141,000 acres of this Suffield pasture carry approximately 5,000 head of breeding cattle for six months. The carrying capacity, determined by many years of research at the Manyberries federal research station, for 1975 was 60 acres per mature animal unit, with one field of coarser sand grass at 80 acres for a 12 month season. That is approximately 11 head per square mile at the 60 acre carrying capacity, and eight head per square mile at the 80 acre one. For a six months' season this means 22 head and 16 head respectively per square mile. That is not very many cattle. I submit there is no way there can be over-grazing as charged by the wildlife people, except around the too few water holes.

This Suffield pasture area is short grass ranching country where our grass is the result of ten to 12 inches total precipitation per year and an evaporation rate of four times the precipitation from a free water surface. I know. My summer grazing range is just the width of the South Saskatchewan River from this pasture. During the 1930's I sometimes rode over much of this same pasture area looking for some of our cattle that had crossed over the river ice in winter and had to be returned by swimming the river in the spring, a very dangerous experience I can assure you.

I want to express my appreciation to the minister for his courtesy in meeting with Mr. Jim Musgrove and myself last February 20. Mr. Musgrove was in Ottawa representing the Suffield PFRA pasture advisory committee. I am sure the minister was a little better informed as a result of that useful meeting.

I suggest that environmentalists, Suffield military staff, and wildlife enthusiasts are in no position to be critical of how cattlemen harvest grass with their cattle when the same kind of grass over the bulk of the Suffield area, excluding the PFRA pasture, is burned off with prairie fires and ploughed up by target tanks being dragged over much of the range, plus soil damage by tank tracks.

Cattlemen ranchers are by nature the very best conservationists. Their long-time livelihood depends on their understanding of and co-operation with nature. Production