

an animal health program which stands as an international bench-mark. The eradication campaign began in 1957 and was waged step by step, province by province and, in truth, farm by farm. From the Magdalen Islands to the Queen Charlotte's, some 39 blood samples were taken, infected herds were quarantined and infected animals destroyed. Certification and testing were required to move cattle between provinces. All animals were tested before sale at auction markets. By 1981 we had narrowed the disease down to only 83 herds nation-wide. Today the number of infected herds is zero.

I believe all Hon. Members can appreciate the magnitude of the task, but what are the benefits of success? For producers it means free movement of cattle throughout Canada. For exporters it means one more bargaining chip in the competitive world market-place. For Canadian taxpayers it means the saving of millions of dollars in compensation payments. Last, but not least, it removes the threat of undulant fever from producers, veterinarians, meat-processing workers and Canadian consumers. Now that we have achieved a nation-wide brucellosis-free status, we must not let down our guard. Only with constant vigilance will it remain a disease of the past in Canada.

In conclusion, I invite all my colleagues in this House to join me in congratulating all those who worked so hard to gain this victory. The brucellosis eradication program stands as a model of what industry and Government can do when they work together in a co-operative effort.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the Minister's announcement of Canada's brucellosis-free status certainly is a happy day for Agriculture Canada, the livestock industry and the provincial veterinary services who participated. Eradication of this disease in Canada is very important because in the past many farmers were put out of business because of the loss of milk and calf production. That was the situation when I entered veterinary practice back in about 1957. I questioned at that time whether an eradication program was possible because of the infectious nature of the disease. However, the program moved forward and it has been a model of success even though it was a massive undertaking. It is interesting that we were able to achieve this in Canada, being the second largest country in the world. The other countries that have achieved this status have relatively small cattle populations and are themselves relatively small geographically.

The benefits of this program flow not only to farmers and the agricultural industry at large. Thousands of Canadians have spent much of their lifetime suffering from constant fever and discomfort as a result of undulant fever. However, it does bode well for our agricultural future because our cattle can now move freely within the country as well as to world markets. Meat production and dairy products are an important part of our agricultural industry.

I would like to pay tribute to Dr. McGowan and the hundreds of veterinarians across the country who made this success possible, as well as the advisory committees who assisted and advised the Department and provincial Governments involved. I do not know exactly who was at the Minis-

ter's celebration luncheon today but I would like to pay tribute to Dr. McGowan's predecessor, Dr. Ken Wells, who was our veterinary director general for many years. He was instrumental in establishing many programs to improve the health of animals in this country and, at the same time, improved the health of people as well.

I would like to sound a note of caution for the future, however. We know this Government is hell-bent on cutting back and privatizing everything in sight. We know the Nielsen task force is cutting some \$58 million from Agriculture Canada's budget as well as deindexing the budget's purchasing power by another \$10 million or \$15 million. If any of this \$60 million to \$65 million cut-back were made in the budget for research into animal disease control, it would do a terrible disservice to the future of the agricultural industry in Canada. You can count on our side of the House opposing any such cut-backs in that regard. However, the eradication of brucellosis in our country is a significant development for agriculture and human health in Canada. I want to express my congratulations and good wishes to everyone who has made this possible. They should be justly proud.

● (1510)

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, in 1950 the first step in a national program to eradicate bovine brucellosis, or Bang's disease, in Canada's national herd was taken. Thirty-five years later we have declared a victory over that disease. That step, a federal-provincial initiative for a national vaccination program, required wisdom, dedication, and courage. It recognized that the disease was a serious problem. That part was easy. However, it also recognized, quite correctly, that it was fitting, proper, and necessary for Government to take the initiative in eradicating this disease.

It was not left up to individual producers to pursue their own short-term interests. The problem was not left up to veterinarians to tackle if and when they were called upon to do so. Neither was it left up to the provinces. The success of this national program depended upon all of these people, but it would never have got off the ground without the decision to take direct government action to solve the problem. Members of the former Health of Animals Branch, individual farmers, the dairy and beef industries, federal and provincial veterinarians associations, and especially the federal Department of Agriculture, contributed greatly to the eradication program.

We must continue to work together to ensure that this disease is not reintroduced into the national herd. We must maintain our stringent testing programs on new entrants to the national herd from outside of the country. We must continue to monitor the situation to ensure that infections do not cross the border through wildlife. We should, as well, assess the relative importance of other diseases to determine if similar efforts should be mounted against them for the long-term benefit of everyone in Canada.

I make these comments because today the Government seems committed to reducing the role of government in Canada and to reducing the amount of money that it spends on