

Research on Treatment of Animals

often is the case. We need to carry out this kind of medical experimentation in order to find cures for cancer, and who can deny it would probably be necessary to inflict some pain, some death and some discomfort on animals in order to bring about a cure for this most dreaded disease. We recognize that there are situations in which pain or discomfort may be experienced by an animal being used for experimental purposes and this may be a necessary concomitant of the investigation. However, such experiments should be, and I think are, only undertaken when, on the basis of expert opinion, the significance of scientific investigation justifies the procedure. Here again a judgment must be made by those individuals who have the responsibility to do so.

• (5:10 p.m.)

What is the responsibility of the government? Would we, in effect, be in the research laboratory itself looking over the shoulder of research scientists? I think not. But I do feel that we have an obligation to provide some kind of guidelines so that the individual medical research technician or doctor will know what is expected of him. I understand that the guide being put out by the organization to which I referred earlier has become so sophisticated in its recommendations that even noise levels in animals rooms are controlled. Background noise may be provided to cover or modify the level of existing noise, depending on the specific need. If this had not been suggested to individual researchers, I wonder whether it would, in fact, have occurred to them.

I think that the care of animals goes beyond their immediate environment. There are also considerations of a structural nature. For example, the location of the building to avoid unnecessary transportation of animals over long distances and exposure to climatic extremes immediately before experimental use are two such considerations. Floors of buildings must be specifically designed to be hard, durable and impervious to water. All of these things to an individual who has little or no concern for the welfare of animals seems to be carrying it to a ridiculous extreme; yet if we do not set these high standards we will surely find that medical researchers will feel it is their moral right to drop below the standard is expected of them.

One further aspect that I should like to stress in connection with animal husbandry is the handling of animals so that they are accustomed to proper and frequent handling and made more suitable for experimentation. Only trained individuals who are familiar with animals and who have been trained in handling and restraint procedures should manipulate animals in order to minimize the possibility of injury to them and to the handler, and to minimize disturbance to the well being of the animal itself.

In conclusion, the humane care and use of research animals, indeed of all animal life, is the concern of any moral and conscientious society. Surely, it is the prime responsibility of those individuals who use animals for research purposes. One cannot underestimate the benefits to man that accrue from the use of animals in biomedical research. We must expect that such research in the

future will bring equal or even greater benefits to all forms of life. It is this expectation that justifies the necessity for animal experimentation.

As I said in my opening remarks, non-sentient and lower forms of animal life are used whenever possible. However, when higher forms of animal life are used, it is the responsibility of the user to provide humane care and treatment, to minimize pain and discomfort and to avoid unnecessary use. I have a daughter who wrote an article for a humane society competition and received an award for her concern for the welfare of the animal world. I am proud to have had the opportunity of playing my part publicly in this forum, as she did in the only forum that was open to her.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a request which I believe will be granted. The hon. member for Vancouver East is not able to be in the chamber this afternoon and he had hoped that the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway might say a few words in this resumed debate. However, the hon. lady did speak when the matter was before us on October 26 and it would require unanimous consent for her to be given the floor again. I am asking that that consent be given; there was a previous understanding that it would.

Mr. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, on the understanding that the hon. member for Hull, who also has spoken previously to this motion, will be afforded an opportunity of saying a few words on the subject.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare will be accorded the privilege of speaking a second time in this debate?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, may I thank the House for its courtesy; I will not trespass unduly on the time of the House. I was very pleased indeed to hear the first speaker welcome this motion, and I should like to re-emphasize the purpose of the motion, which is to have the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) designate a committee to which various matters affecting animals would be sent for purposes of regular discussion. This committee would have the power to call witness and to call for documents, to study the matter and to make recommendations in its report.

I feel that it is of great importance that this be done. I say this because I do not think that animal well-being or welfare has received any concerted study by the House, partly because we are so engrossed in the welfare and needs of human beings that we have not yet got around to animals. I believe that one of the reasons for the establishment of such a committee now, and for it to be put to work without delay, is that the Canadian public as a whole needs to be alerted to the matter. Some of them are. Some members of the public have been pressing for this action for years. But the on the whole the Canadian public is not alerted to a number of the aspects governing animal welfare.

[Mr. Cullen.]