

*Routine Proceedings*

special problems that people who are interested in raising deer, fallow farms I think they are called, experience, particularly bringing in does and bucks from New Zealand?

**Mr. Hovdebo:** Part of the recommendations which the public accounts committee put before this House deal exactly with that question or are relative to that question, the need to amend the present regulations. We all agree that we have to be absolutely sure that no disease is brought in which we do not understand or recognize here, or any other disease that we have in this country. For instance, there are different kinds of brucellosis in Australia than there are in Canada.

At present the regulations for importing goats, sheep, and so on are specific, the idea being to keep them in quarantine long enough so that we can be sure that they are not carrying a disease. Even then it is a dangerous procedure. When an animal is brought in, it may have developed resistance or even be immune to certain kinds of diseases because it has been with a particular herd which has developed this immunity. The moment it is put with other animals, the disease then breaks out and you have it within your herd. There are intermediate quarantines which allow the animals to be put with the kinds of animals they are going to be living with after they are brought into the country so that if there is any possibility of the spread of disease it will be recognized.

The answer to the question is basically that it is not as simple as just saying we need new regulations. It is much more a matter of knowing for sure that we are not bringing in any diseases and knowing how to control those situations. It is a very complex structure.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bellemare:** Mr. Speaker, it is mostly a comment that I would like to make, since I am on the Committee.

Since we have very little time left for this question, I would like to raise the matter of the—

[*English*]

—third report of the Public Accounts Committee. I have grave concerns, as the report states, regarding the inspection of food.

One concern that I would like to add that is not written in the report is the fact that the government is now going to be permitting food irradiation, especially in the poultry field. With free trade in place we will see now the dismantling of the management of that particular industry and we will be getting poultry from the United States.

More importantly, I am concerned that there will be no labelling of food that is irradiated. I believe the consumer community should have the right to have food that is going to be irradiated labelled properly so that people may make a choice as to whether or not to buy irradiated poultry from a particular food chain. They should have a choice.

The government has assured me that there will be no health problems with food irradiation. However, I believe very strongly that we should label that part of the food so there would be a choice made by the consumer.

The recommendation in the report that more inspectors be hired is extremely important, again as it relates to food. We are responsible for the safety of our communities, and by constantly cutting the public service, the risk of having less inspectors is putting our communities at risk.

The previous speaker mentioned control of animal and plant disease. There were recommendations that we give early consideration to the introduction of amendments to the import control provisions of the plant quarantine and animal disease.

For example, in labour relations we need more training for inspectors. The committee was very concerned by the Auditor General's findings on employer-employee relations regarding the Food Inspection Branch.

[*Translation*]

Your Committee also noted the need to improve the training of food and plant inspectors at border stations. The Auditor General discovered, for example, that the veterinary technicians who perform the inspections do not receive thorough training in food science. The Department informed your Committee that it is allocating more resources for the technical training of inspectors and the further training of supervisors in surveillance techniques, which the Auditor General will mention in his follow-up report on this subject.