

Humane Animal Traps

I would also support the phasing-out period as it is recognized that it is not practical to have immediate banning of existing trapping methods where no completely viable alternative is available to the trapper. The government could also assist by subsidizing part of the cost of replacing old traps with the new more humane type.

It is not enough that the government recognize the inhumanity of the leg-hold trap, but it should take a stand by giving enough financial support so that the necessary research can be done as quickly as possible and with the incentive of financial assistance in helping the trapper to replace the old traps. A time will come when this primitive form of trapping will become a thing of the past. There should be no more delays.

Mr. Maurice Harquail (Restigouche): Mr. Speaker, first I wish to congratulate the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) on his initiative. However, we have seen in the last half hour or so that Bill C-208 as it was presented no longer exists. However, with the unanimous consent and agreement of the House its subject matter will be referred for consideration to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.

There are two points that should be identified when discussing a matter such as this. One is with regard to consideration for those people who are gainfully employed in the fur industry. No mention has been made of any discussion that might have been undertaken with regard to protecting the position of those who secure their livelihood through this industry. All too often, although with good intention, we move in the direction of bringing ourselves to a point where some harm can be done to Canadians who rely completely on this type of livelihood.

The other point is that more consideration should be given to taking action with regard to education. More educational programs should be encouraged. I hope this point will be considered by members of the standing committee and that they will make some recommendation or suggestion. Funds could be made available to encourage the presentation in the media, and through educational television programs, of the whole story of the use of leg-hold traps in Canada. Perhaps progress might be quickly made if programs on television were to show the agony these fur-bearing animals must endure when caught in traps of the type described.

● (1740)

The government should certainly be concerned about the type of trapping to be permitted in Canada. Something certainly should be done. The government has made its position clear. I understand that the University of Guelph has received some \$60,000 for work in this field, and I would recommend that more be done in this regard in addition to reaching whatever areas we can through educational programs to train people who will eventually earn their living by trapping. I understand that a committee has already been set up, with federal input, to look into this subject. Despite the possibility of some difficulty with regard to jurisdiction, I believe this is a topic which can very well be brought up by a private member

[Mr. Howie.]

in an effort to move more quickly, through co-operation and discussion, to bring about the result we all desire.

I conclude by restating that when we consider this question we should deal not only with the method of trapping used but with the whole question of employment or unemployment. I am always a little concerned when we talk about acting in a way which might solve one problem only to create or worsen another. I personally am hopeful that various departments of government, such as the Department of Fisheries and the Environment or the Ministry of Science and Technology could find a more humane method of trapping animals. One might think that in these days of advanced technology there would be no need to be concerned about the use of out-dated trapping devices. I would hope that this measure, when it is brought before a committee, will be studied with the help of specialized witnesses, people who are experts in the field, so that action may be taken to correct the situation which presently exists.

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to speak in this debate, but I have heard so many fine speeches that I am tempted and inspired to speak. The reason I am tempted and inspired to speak is that I wonder whether we should not widen the reference with regard to the topic. The topic at the moment is inhumane leg-hold traps, and the committee is going to discuss this topic.

I have had the opportunity to see other types of inhumane killing. Two years ago I went to the Magdalen Islands to see the seal hunt. I saw little seals being struck on the head with clubs and very little has been done with regard to that. Some of us in this party are strongly opposed to it. At the same time we realize the economic difficulties which confront people who hunt the seals. Our leader went down to Newfoundland and spoke to some of the sealers, and they told him about the financial hardship which would be caused if the seal hunt were banned.

The hon. member for the Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth) has drawn attention to the financial hardship which would be caused if there were some form of prohibition against hunting, more especially the hunting of the fox and other fur-bearing animals.

It is important that any study should include the economic consequences which would follow total prohibition. I hope that when the measure gets to the committee its terms of reference can be widened to include consideration of the economic and financial consequences which would follow total prohibition. I notice that one of the members from Newfoundland appears anxious to get up and speak on this subject. He is probably familiar with the seal hunt and familiar with the economic and financial implications of the seal hunt for Newfoundland. I hope that the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro)—it is always a very difficult riding to pronounce. It almost sounds like Eskimo sandwich.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Saanich. S-a-a-n-i-c-h.