

Adjournment Debate

It is illegal to send live horses from the United States to France, so they are brought to Canada, mostly to the province of Quebec, and after a couple of weeks are certified as Canadian horses and shipped off. When a horse is shipped live, it must have a certificate of health for a preceding period. But how can anyone tell, when the horse has been in the United States for most of the time? It is a tragic joke.

The inspectors of the last shipment of horses were representatives of the Ontario Humane Society and the Canadian Wild Horse Society. These inspections and observations were carried out independently and proved beyond all doubt that the majority of the horses that were shipped from Canada on the steamship *Athene* were in fact slaughtered immediately upon arrival in Europe.

How much longer are we going to accept trade in horses across the Atlantic? The Government of Canada has defended the trade by stating that they see nothing wrong in the principle involved so long as the animals are in satisfactory condition to ship. Obviously, the Government of Canada is not concerned with the welfare of the animals after they arrive at their destination. With the modern processing methods that we have today, it is most inhumane to ship slaughter horses live to Europe.

With unemployment running rampant as it is today, we could very easily set up another industry in Canada; we could have our own plants that could ship dressed meat to Europe. I would have no reservations about suggesting that this would take some people off the already confused and blinded unemployment insurance rolls. As a man who has shipped thousands of head of livestock to eastern Canada, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you it is bad enough shipping to eastern Canada, let alone shipping to Europe.

Mr. Charles Turner (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, this is a topic which was debated once before in this House not too long ago. I draw the hon. member's attention to the parliamentary secretary's statement on this matter which can be found on page 4926 of *Hansard*.

I have stated that I, too, share the concern of all hon. members with regard to the humane treatment of animals. With respect to the shipment of horses to Europe, the Department of Agriculture has instituted a program designed to ensure the humane treatment of horses shipped by sea. This program, which began in the fall of 1970, consists of a seven to ten-day preconditioning period around the port of loading and requires that the horses be less than 11 years old, in good condition and free from sickness, that mares not be in a state of advanced pregnancy and that a veterinarian accompany any shipment of more than 25 horses.

The hon. member also spoke of the Canadian processing industry. As I have said before in this House, Canada's trade in horsemeat to Europe has increased dramatically in recent years, and appears to be growing. The movement of live horses has not increased by the same amount. For the information of hon. members, 5.3 million pounds of horsemeat were exported to Europe in 1969-70, whereas in the 1972-73 fiscal year 19.1 million pounds were exported. During the same period the number of horses shipped declined.

It is our position that the livestock trade is an important part of Canadian agriculture. Rather than ban the movement of any type of livestock, we feel it is in the best interests of Canada's farmers to do everything possible to make certain that shipments are efficient and humane.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.29 p.m.