

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

Hon. Nathan Nurgitz: I move that the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole and that the Senate do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to hear from witnesses.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

PLANT PROTECTION BILL

CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Senate was accordingly adjourned during pleasure and put into a Committee of the Whole on the Bill C-67, the Honourable Gerald R. Ottenheimer in the Chair.

Senator Doody: Mr. Chairman, I ask that the Honourable Harry Brightwell be invited, along with his support staff, to participate in the deliberations of the Committee of the Whole.

The Chairman: Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Pursuant to Order of the Senate, the Honourable Harry Brightwell, Member of Parliament, Ms. Diane Coates Milne, and Dr. W. Weiler were escorted to seats in the Senate chamber.

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, I take great pleasure in introducing to you Dr. Brightwell. As I have said, he will be prepared to answer any questions you might have. I do not know whether he has an opening statement to make or whether we will proceed directly to questions.

The Chairman: Honourable senators, the Senate is in Committee of the Whole on Bill C-67, to prevent the importation, exportation and spread of pests injurious to plants and to provide for their control and eradication and for the certification of plants and other things.

Shall discussion on the title of the bill be postponed?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Hon. Senators: Carried.

The Chairman: Shall clause 2 carry?

Senator Frith: Mr. Chairman, I believe we have questions for the witness. I do not think any of the questioning will affect the title, but perhaps we had better pause now for some questions.

I have one or two questions dealing with the intervention made by Senator Nurgitz. He referred quite frequently to "plant-based industries." Could the witnesses give some examples to one as unversed as I am of the sort of industry I should

be thinking of as a plant-based industry, when I am driving along the highway or reading advertisements?

Dr. Harry Brightwell, Member of Parliament and Chairman of the House of Commons Committee on Agriculture: Senator, you have heard my background as a veterinarian. I have never treated a sick plant in my life. I have some experts here, however, who could answer your question. I would ask Diane Coates Milne, the Director of the Plant Health Directorate, to comment on your question.

Ms. Diane Coates Milne, Director, Plant Health Directorate, Plant Protection Division, Agriculture Canada: When we refer to plant-based industries we mean everything from the horticultural industry to the grains and oilseeds industry. We are really talking about any kind of plant that can grow within Canada, anything that can be grown as an agricultural field crop or in the forestry industry.

Senator Frith: Can you tell us the dollar value of this industry, roughly, per year? If you cannot, that is fine. Is it an industry that earns us currency because it is an important exporter?

Ms. Coates Milne: Yes.

Senator Frith: Do you have the figures on what contribution it makes to the balance of trade?

Dr. Brightwell: Senator, perhaps I could intervene. From the agricultural end, our largest export is wheat, of course. That fits into this area.

Senator Frith: This bill will have a lot to do with wheat, will it?

Dr. Brightwell: Yes, with wheat and with all plant products. I am sure I am safe in saying that wheat, as a major product, will dominate, I suppose, in many areas, although when you get into horticultural crops and other areas of specialty crops there are specific disease problems. Perhaps we have bred a lot of our diseases out of wheat.

The exports of wheat amount to, I think, something over \$10 billion—a huge figure like that. As to the largest earner of import or export dollars, we have not counted it.

• (1610)

Senator Frith: The pests that we are concerned with constitute a real concern to that industry, and this is an improved way of controlling them, as I understand it.

Ms. Coates Milne: Yes, it is. Canada enjoys preferential treatment in many markets of the world because of the pest-free products that it is able to export. This bill protects agricultural and reforestry bases from pests which could be introduced or spread within Canada which could jeopardize our export opportunities.

Senator Hays: I question whether or not this legislation will assist us in any way in avoiding what has been characterized as harassment problems when exporting certain products into the United States. Does this have any relationship to the Free Trade Agreement entered into with the United States?