

Western Canada Veterinary College

Essex South, but we do recognize the need for a veterinary college in the west, and I am speaking in support of that project.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): I wish, first of all, to extend my congratulations to the hon. member who is putting forward this measure for the establishment of a veterinary college in western Canada. I believe the establishment of a new veterinary college in western Canada involves considerably more than education alone. I think it is one which has not been met as yet, and I believe it is the responsibility of the federal government to see that it is discharged. I am prepared to accept the fact that the provinces by and large are responsible for education, but when we come to the question of veterinarians and the responsibility of looking after the health of animals in Canada we get right into an area in which the federal government has assumed responsibility.

We find ourselves in a position where there are, I think, 50 vacant positions in the health of animals branch of the federal government and it is about time this government made a realistic contribution toward the establishment of this college. The government has announced that it is prepared to pay 25 per cent, to a maximum of \$625,000, toward the capital cost of establishing the college, but it has said nothing about the cost of training the students after the capital works have been completed. I do not believe this represents a satisfactory discharge of the responsibility which the federal government has toward the health of animals in Canada or for the provision of the staff necessary to carry out this particular work. In addition, anyone involved in the livestock industry recognizes that if we are to maintain our export markets, particularly for beef, we must maintain a high standard of health among these animals and be prepared to limit the spread of any contagious disease immediately it manifests itself.

There are some who maintain it should be the sole responsibility of the federal government to set up this college and operate it. I think we would have far more chance of success if we were to explore the possibility of co-operation between the four western provinces and the federal government. I am sure they are ready to co-operate. For example, the ministers of agriculture of the four western provinces held a meeting in Edmonton in January, 1962 and emphasized that a veterinary college was necessary in western Canada and that one should be established at the earliest possible date. The hon. member for Melville (Mr. Ormiston) quoted, I believe, from the *Lethbridge Herald* something which Premier Manning of Alberta was supposed

to have said. I might point out that the *Lethbridge Herald* is notorious for being inaccurate in its interpretation of what Premier Manning or anyone else belonging to the Social Credit party may say at any time, so we must regard with great suspicion any headline which that paper uses in trying to define the position which the premier may have taken. Even if there was some accuracy in the reporting of the remarks made at that time, the premier and, in particular, the minister of agriculture for Alberta, are fully in favour at the present time of Alberta assuming at least a fair share of responsibility for getting this college established at once. As a matter of fact, I think it would be fair to say they are willing to assume far more than could properly be called the responsibility of the province of Alberta at this time.

I must point out that there are changes taking place very rapidly in the matter of veterinary medicine. I think there are also rapid changes taking place in the cost of building a veterinary college. Certain statements made last night will, of course, change this factor. It gyrates up and down as far as costs are concerned. But I think we must recognize that the \$2½ million which has been accepted as the figure needed to build the college is subject to change, and in fact has changed. I was talking to the minister of agriculture of the province of Alberta only a few days ago. He told me that they had conducted rather extensive feasibility and capital cost studies regarding this matter. The government of Alberta, in co-operation with the University of Alberta, has done considerable investigation work to ascertain the capital cost of building and equipping a suitable institution, and they are as follows: Faculty buildings and equipment, \$1½ million; clinic and animal colonies, \$2 million, research buildings and land, \$1 million. That amounts to somewhere between \$4 million and \$4½ million to establish the kind of institution which is necessary to turn out 30 graduates per year. I think all hon. members will agree that this is the very minimum amount graduating veterinarians per year to satisfy the demand which will be placed on the college once it is in operation. All this is calculated on the basis of there being no sales tax on building materials. In addition to that, the estimated operating costs for the first year with 40 freshmen students would be \$40,000. It is calculated that a fair fee per student would be something like \$290. So that it is obvious that something like \$700 or \$710 subsidy would be necessary on the part of one or another government.

I suggest that if the federal government requires at least 25 per cent of the students