

*Treatment of Animals*

The four points of this motion are really important simply because we all recognize the principle of protection of any life. However, although we take into account the scale of values, we have to consider the problem with regard to the treatment of animals for laboratory research, pets, trapping methods, not as scatter brained people but as well balanced individuals with common sense. Of course, as I said before, we all recognize that conservation is the most significant aspect.

If we refer to subsection (a) of the motion, we see that the member for Vancouver-east (Mr. Winch) wants steps to be taken to protect the animals used for laboratory research. According to our information, if a health certificate is duly issued by the Department of Agriculture for animals imported for medical research, no other restrictions or regulations apply to their import.

In addition to the government, several associations, not only in Canada but in foreign countries, are interested in protecting those animals. For instance, an international union for the conservation of nature and natural resources is proposing that special steps be taken with regard to the import or export of species threatened with extinction.

It is unfair to insinuate that what steps have been taken in Canada to protect the animals used for research are inadequate, because in the last few years, some groups have made very serious and costly surveys in that field, with a view to ensuring humane treatment to those animals.

As early as 1963, the Medical Research Council proposed the establishment of a special committee to study the problem of animals used for research. Since, various associations in Canada, universities, veterinarians, doctors pharmaceutical laboratory researchers have worked in that field, financed by special associations. They visited several Canadian universities to investigate the situation. Surveys having been made in various university laboratories, they continued their surveys in other establishments such as pharmaceutical laboratories.

The ways in which those animals are bought, used and treated are looked into. According to the reports on those surveys, there is no question of cruelty. I would not even go so far as to say that no mention has been made of abuse.

I believe that in that field in this day and age, we should have more faith in our scien-

tists, who are the elite of our civilization and who must use laboratory animals to do research work.

Instead of proposing the establishment of a Standing Committee of the House, when we already have enough of them, I wonder whether those interested in such matters could not just as well ask questions on that subject when they attend meetings of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. In fact, that committee is interested in some of those question and has legislated in that field. When it comes to the trapping methods in the case of fur-bearing animals, or the protection of wild animals, I believe we should resort to the Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Whenever I speak of a scale of values, I should like to remind hon. members of the results of such research in laboratories. All of us recognize that progress in medical science, which enabled men to extend the life span and relieve human suffering, was possible only because of experiments on animals. There have been very few cases of ill-used animals in laboratories. Most of those experiments were conducted with the greatest care for the animals involved. They have generally resulted in improvements. One might quote a lot of examples where anesthetics or other drugs have been used on men after having been first experimented on animals. The same is true about surgical methods.

It was last fall, I believe, that the province of Ontario passed a bill to protect small animals used for laboratory purposes.

As for the way men treat household pets, there are also in the act provisions dealing with animal care. This comes under the Criminal Code which has several sections providing penalties for those who mistreat animals.

● (5:30 p.m.)

Of course some people are responsible for seeing that the Criminal Code is respected in that respect. Our police forces are trying day by day to update their methods. We have also a great many humanitarian associations, such as the anti-vivisectionist groups whose purpose is to alleviate the suffering imposed on animals by surgery in laboratory experiments.

The powers conferred by the Criminal Code have been extended with the passing of Bill C-150, in 1969. Mammals and birds are protected against any ill-treatment by the relevant sections of the Criminal Code and the