

Animal Legislation Still Haunts Rural Canada

Recently the “good folks” – the farmers, ranchers, hunters, trappers, fishermen and loggers, the rural sustainable use community – won a small battle in the war to defeat Bill C-15B, the proposed federal animal cruelty act. The Bill died at the recent proroguing of Parliament. The victory is temporary, because the bill can be re-introduced at the same stage that it died, as opposed to starting from scratch. Bill C-15B was in the final stage of Senate approval so, if the Liberal government chooses, it could be sent back to the Senate for speedy passage.

The measure moves animals one step closer to being granted new rights, in line with the radical animal rights agenda. It is bad for rural communities because it will allow more intrusions into what are normal animal husbandry practices, and expose animal industry workers to capricious and intimidating legal actions.

The stated goal of the radical animal rights movement is the complete elimination of animal use by people, including those used for vital medical research, a practice that has saved all of our lives. The best way to eliminate animal use is legislation that opens the door to lawsuits, inspections, increased bureaucracy, and general meddling by animal welfare societies; groups that are increasingly “hijacked” by animal rights extremists.

You think I’m kidding? A member of the Winnipeg Humane Society (WHS) and another from the Animal Alliance of Canada recently teamed up to write a letter to a national newspaper condemning modern animal agriculture. The Animal Alliance is one of the most radical of all Canada’s animal rights groups and this “alliance” with the Winnipeg Humane Society, a supposedly mainstream animal welfare group, should be of great concern to rural communities.

In spite of repeated assurances from government officials, animal industries remain worried. “This law, as it’s worded, opens us up to frivolous lawsuits,” warns Peggy Strankman, spokesman for the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association. “We’d be wasting a lot of time in court, and a lot of money on lawyers, defending our management practices.”

Many animal rights extremists do intend to push the law as far as they can and they view Bill C-15B as but the first step in the granting of expanded animal rights. The strategy of the animal activists was revealed by Clayton Ruby, a Toronto animal rights lawyer, who said in the March 18, 2000 edition of the Montreal Gazette:

“...over the next 10 years, the changes will be subtle, masquerading as animal protection and continuing to de-

velop as a moralistic adjunct to human rights until some of them at least get their own entrenched in law. We’ll see the development of animal rights in a very hesitant way, through incremental changes in case law and judges attitudes...” The article goes on to say, “We need legislative protections and legislative change but you take what you can get. We’re just at the beginning of the movement...”

Bill C-15B is another example of legislation crafted for urban voters but with profound effects on rural communities. The livestock industry, an island of prosperity in a sea of low commodity prices, is carrying many rural economies.

Rural, animal industry, and medical research interests have another, last chance to deal with Bill C-15B. The Liberal Rural Caucus, under the able chairmanship of Ontario MP Murray Calder, strongly opposes the bill, as does the Official Opposition.

If Bill C-15B is passed in its present form, all Canadians will feel the pain.

Reprinted from The Frontier Centre for Public Policy. A Backgrounder on Bill C-15B - “Giving Animals Rights” can be viewed at www.fcpp.org.

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