

On Bill C-205

I am writing in regards to Bill C-205, a federal bill presented by Conservative Member of Parliament John Barlow. This Bill, *An Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act*, purports to protect the health of commercially raised animals, yet it does quite the opposite.

Observe the public service commercials and media releases produced by the farming industry. We see barns packed with piglets, and layers upon layers of egg-laying chickens confined to cages. And that is what they WANT us to see! They are not showing us the gestation crates that are a living hell for mother sows, the chickens that succumb to infections and mutilations due to close confines with other chickens, the baby chicks that are deemed “surplus” and fed live through grinders, the cows that are forcibly and violently impregnated (in human terms, raped), only to have their newborn calves ripped away from them so that we humans can profit from their lactation. There are many practices, unseen by the public, that are routinely carried out on farms to the detriment of animals.

Bill C-205 does not intend to address this; it does not intend to ease the suffering of farm animals. Bill intends to do is to prevent animal activists from entering onto farm property to observe and report on the treatment of animals kept there. The Bill states that

No person shall, without lawful authority or excuse, enter a building or other enclosed space in which animals are kept knowing that . . . could result in the exposure of animals to disease or toxic substance that is capable of affecting them or contaminating them.

The wording of this is, I think, purposely very vague. Something *could* happen, and that incident may be *capable* of contaminating an animal. Also note that this Bill applies only to people who do not have *lawful authority* to enter a farm building or enclosed space. This means that all farm employees and people who regularly do business with a farm (for example, farm owners and family members, buyers, operators and slaughterhouse owners) are excluded. Of course, any one of these people may

“knowingly or recklessly” endanger the health of farm animals. Yet, only people “without lawful authority or excuse” are subject to prosecution under Bill C-205.

So, it appears that Bill C-205 is not about animal welfare. Is it then a Bill about trespassing? Members of Parliament should know that it is already an offence to trespass on farm property. In fact, they should know that this matter of Trespass is under Provincial jurisdiction and each province already has legislation addressing it. As this is an area under the control of provinces, Bill C-205 may in fact be unconstitutional.

Under the *Criminal Code*, it is illegal to harm or poison animals. We knowingly send animals to slaughterhouses, where they are gassed, stunned, boiled and killed in the thousands every day. These practices, being part of an industry and part of the commerce that keeps the economy going, are excluded from the harm to animals that could be prosecuted under the *Criminal Code*. But we do know about them. And we also know about the abuses inflicted upon farm animals (some of which I’ve already mentioned), the mistreatment of animals in circuses and sea world shows, and the inhumane transport of live horses to be made into sushi in Asia, all due to the efforts of animal activists.

We, as Canadian citizens, NEED to see the conditions in which the animals who end up on our plates live. WE NEED the farming industry to be more transparent. If our government is unwilling or unable to truly stand for the welfare and rights of animals, then we NEED activists who will have the courage to step up, observe and document the conditions on farms and other places where animals suffer. Bill C-205 does nothing to protect animals. Bill C-205 just serves to stop animal activists from “interfering” with the big business of animal agriculture by exposing what really happens on farms.

I implore you, for the sake of the animals, do not pass Bill C-205.