

able to gather, there has been universal support of at least the principle of the bill. I would suggest that if second reading is given this afternoon and some honourable members desire more information than I am able to give, we might adjourn during pleasure and consider the bill in the Committee on Natural Resources. I have arranged with my colleague the Minister of Agriculture that if the committee meets and desires him to come, he will attend.

In the meantime I will attempt to explain the bill. For the first time within the memory of anyone in Canada, honourable senators, Canadian cattle have suffered from an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Nearly every country in the world, including the United States, has had some cases, and in several countries the disease is endemic. During the past year there have been severe outbreaks in Europe and the British Isles. Thanks to precautionary measures taken in Canada, we have managed until this present outbreak to maintain a clean bill of health.

Because the disease has never attained or held a foothold in this country, the policy of extermination is considered to be the only one to follow in order to prevent a continuing burden on the livestock industry. Although vaccination has been practised in parts of Europe, where the disease has long been established, all veterinary advice is against the use of vaccine or other treatment under conditions which prevail in Canada.

While the disease is a highly infectious one and can spread very rapidly, experience in Great Britain and the United States has shown that with proper care and prompt action it can be quickly eradicated and its spread checked by slaughtering the infected animals and any animals known to have been in any way in contact with possible infection.

The purpose of this legislation is to give the minister authority to order the slaughter of any animal or animals which are infected or suspected of being infected, in order to eradicate the disease and prevent its spread, and to pay fair and reasonable compensation to the owners of such cattle. This compensation is to be determined in a manner prescribed by regulations to be made by the Governor in Council following a report to be made by a board of valuers appointed by the Governor in Council.

Provision is at present made under the Animal Contagious Diseases Act to compensate owners for animals destroyed on account of bovine tuberculosis, under departmental policies which are carried out in conjunction with the provincial governments, who share part of the expenses of the

actual testing. However, only those animals actually affected by bovine tuberculosis are destroyed. In actual experience it is generally necessary to destroy but a few animals in certain herds, and each owner concerned does not suffer a serious loss in his normal operations.

But the policy of extermination, which calls for destruction of all animals on a farm, plus a lengthy period of quarantine, is a more serious blow to a farmer's operations, and it is considered that provision should be made for compensation according to the actual value of the animals destroyed. It should be pointed out that the farmer's premises will be quarantined for at least ninety days after the destruction of his animals, and he will be deprived of revenue during the period; and also that in all probability it will take him a much longer period to build his cattle holdings up to what they were before his herd was destroyed.

Hon. R. B. Horner: Honourable senators, as we all know, there has been a long discussion in the other house on the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, the effects of which are so tragic, especially in the province from which I come. However, there are still a good many points that might well be discussed. That title of the bill before us—"An Act for the control and extirpation of foot and mouth disease"—is somewhat misleading, for the purpose of the bill is really to compensate those farmers who suffer the loss of cattle and certain other property. It is necessary that the bill go through as quickly as possible, and so far as I personally am concerned I doubt at the moment whether there would be any object in going into committee after second reading.

The cattlemen of the province of Saskatchewan are placed in a serious position. I am hopeful, however, that the disease will be confined to a small area. In the northern part of the province from which I come, particularly around Meadow Lake, there is ample grass for grazing. The cattle raised in this area are not as a rule finished for market, but are sent further south to cattle buyers, who grain-feed them. Some of the stock are now fully grown, and will be marketed in the spring. But these feeder cattle were purchased last fall at prices as high as 28 and 30 cents; now, because of the provincial embargoes, the finished product is worth about 22 cents. I hope this problem will be remedied shortly. I do not wish to criticize the government in this connection, for we must convince other provinces of our determination to stamp out this disease in Canada.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: Hear, hear.