

*Foot-and-mouth disease*

all the information available could be obtained. I have no official information, but the hon. member for Lake Centre has information of very much the same sort as I have.

I have received information from a retired veterinarian in the province of Saskatchewan for whom I have the highest regard. I am not going to mention his name but if I were to do so I think the minister would agree that he is one of the outstanding veterinarians in Canada at the present time. The information I received from that source was that there were facilities at the university of Saskatchewan and highly qualified veterinarians who, if they had been given the opportunity to examine the blood or saliva of the affected animals, would have been able to say that it was not stomatitis but something else, even if they could not have diagnosed it as foot-and-mouth disease.

I cannot understand one of the chiefs of the health of animals branch going out to Saskatchewan in December and not bringing back samples to Hull in order to try to identify this disease which, as the hon. member for Lake Centre said, had aroused the suspicions of the laymen, of farmers in that area of Saskatchewan. I think that this matter should be the subject of a very full inquiry by the standing committee on agriculture. I believe that committee should be immediately set up and the officials of the department should be called before it.

I agree with the hon. member for Lake Centre that this is a very serious matter for the people who are having their herds destroyed, who are quarantined, and those who cannot market feed grain, hay or other produce out of the affected area. But there are others involved who are not going to get compensation under this bill. I refer to the dairy farmers of that whole area. What is going to be done for them? What is going to be done for the farmers who cannot ship their feed grain out of the area? What is going to be done for the stock men who will have to retain their cattle on their farms probably for months, unable to market them? Yet those cattle are ready for market and every day means a loss, although maybe not entirely, to these men who are compelled by the quarantine that has been instituted to retain the animals on their farms. Therefore I say there are more people involved than the persons whose animals are slaughtered or whose goods are destroyed.

To my mind, if this outbreak is not brought under control—and I hope it will be—it will be one of the greatest calamities that have befallen this country since the years of the great drought between 1930 and 1939. I cannot

understand the laxity of the health of animals branch, and I refer particularly to the high official who went there in December. Indeed I am told that a quarantine was put on and was then taken off, and that during the time the quarantine was off farmers who had visited that farm took feeder cattle, or animals that became feeder cattle, to the Burns plant in Regina which cattle were moved out of that plant to farms where this contagious disease has since appeared. If that is true it does show great negligence on the part of those responsible. I am at a loss to understand why, with all the veterinarians in that area attending these animals and with early reports made to the federal health of animals branch, it was not until February 19 or thereabouts that the disease was diagnosed. It is all very well for the minister to say that in order to diagnose specifically this disease certain serums had to be brought in from the United Kingdom. I am surprised to hear that. I would have thought that in countries like the United States and Canada, where we have large ranches and hundreds of thousands of cattle, there would have been vaccines or antidotes, or at least the secretions necessary for identification purposes, which would have permitted a quick diagnosis of this dread disease to have been made.

I thoroughly agree with the hon. member for Lake Centre that we should have more provision for compensation than is in this bill. I believe the compensation that will have to be paid should take into account the actual physical value of the animals. If the stock is purebred, then it should be paid for as purebred stock. I think the people of Canada will expect adequate compensation to be paid those who suffer because their cattle are slaughtered, as well as all those who may suffer indirectly.

I also agree, as I have said over and over again in the house in days gone by, that we were placing all our eggs in one basket when we lost the British overseas market for pork products and other meats. I believe everything possible should be done to dispose of some of any surplus meat in the United Kingdom market. I know the policies of various governments of Canada, tariff policies and so on, have made it difficult for the British to market goods in this country and thereby obtain the dollars necessary to buy our bacon and other meat products. It may be that by loan or in some other way we should have to provide the dollars with which they could buy these products. But we cannot allow these commodities to go to waste, nor can we allow them to pile up in great surpluses. We shall have to dispose of them. We can dispose of more in Canada than we