

Foot-and-mouth disease

mean the figure of \$40, and the figure of \$100. As the hon. member for Lake Centre has said, I believe a reasonable economic value should be paid. I do not believe that a farmer who is game enough to pay \$30,000 or \$40,000 for a Shorthorn heifer, an Aberdeen Angus or a Holstein bull should expect to get \$40,000 because after all it is a matter of judgment. I have some experience in this, and often it is a matter of contest between the man who wants the bull and the auctioneer. I do not believe that we should expect the treasury department—I look at the Minister of Finance now because I know his zeal for hanging on to all the surplus he has—

Mr. Abbott: Hear, hear.

Mr. Rowe: I do not think that he should pay out fantastic figures. He should not be influenced particularly by whose ox is gored. If a wide-open end were left, especially in a year just before an election, and despite the confidence I have in the government, I fear they might veer a little bit towards some of their particular friends who have lost a very valuable herd. But, Mr. Chairman, it goes far beyond that. We find that we have a situation here in Canada—and I say this in all sincerity, Mr. Chairman—that is one of the most vital that will be before this house this session.

I know the Minister of Agriculture will tell you about his visit to western Canada and about how nobody mentioned this problem to him. I have often been to places where nobody mentioned the cattle business, the horse business, the agricultural business or several other things that I might be interested in personally, especially if I were talking politics to them.

I know the Minister of Agriculture was in western Canada in very critical days. I refer to the days following the death of our late monarch. I doubt whether the minister would be talking very much about other problems at that time. But, Mr. Chairman, the facts stand pleading before us for consideration. There is the fact that on November 26 last there was in western Canada an outbreak of what veterinarians called vesicular stomatitis. It is true that most of the local people, including the local veterinarians, thought the symptoms were indicative of only a temporary disease that would not affect the herds particularly, and that would not affect the carloads that were being shipped to Ontario—to my section of the province, and to that section represented by the members from Middlesex, and those sections represented by other hon. members. It was considered non-contagious, or at least a disease which was not serious.

[Mr. Rowe.]

Since I was the size of one of these page boys I can remember on my father's farm that if we had a lame cow, or a cow that was slobbering, or a cow that was coughing up her cud, or a cow that was not doing well—if, in short, we had a cow that was losing weight, one of the dreaded things we asked ourselves was this: Could it be possible that she had the foot-and-mouth disease?

There is not an hon. member, whether he be in the legal profession, the medical or any other profession—not one of them who has lived on a farm—who cannot recall this. I can recall it as vividly as if it were last night. When I was a boy, just beginning to go to school, and I asked my father about the foot-and-mouth disease he told me that it was one of the most dreaded things that could ever hit the livestock industry.

The veterinarians would look into those cases and say, "No, I do not think it is that. It is something else." But, Mr. Speaker, we have advanced a long way from those days. Today we have a laboratory in Hull; we have a laboratory at Saskatoon; we have laboratories in different places across Canada. We do not take second place to any country in our technical knowledge and in our cultural advancement. We take second place to none so far as the science of medicine, and the practice carried on by veterinarians, are concerned.

There is no one who would argue more vigorously in support of what I have said in this connection than would the Minister of Agriculture. And yet we have this situation that developed three long months ago, this situation where the cows are slobbering, where they have blisters on their tongues—in short, where they have all the symptoms that are known to be those of the foot-and-mouth disease.

I am not going to criticize any of those scientists. I am not going to say that the Minister of Agriculture, who is so busy in connection with many other important things, is responsible. But, Mr. Chairman, somebody in Canada, whether it is in the bureaucratic set-up of this dominion or not, is responsible for that dreaded disease which was developing for three months prior to its diagnosis. They cannot escape at least some form of responsibility for a condition where, overnight, our exports to the United States valued at about \$125 million are cut off. Then there is another \$200 million taken off the people connected with the great and basic livestock industry of this country. They are now told that they cannot ship their cattle into another province. We are told, so far as the United States is concerned, that we cannot ship to that country. All this has