

*Foot-and-mouth disease*

under the impression that it required a considerable time to determine this disease. If what the hon. member for Brant-Wentworth said is correct, and I would assume it is, since he is a veterinarian, then it makes it more difficult to explain why the disease was not detected sooner. There must have been some neglect somewhere in regard to that.

I think however that if the minister—as I believe he has—accepts the proposition that this matter should come before the committee on agriculture, witnesses could be brought before that committee and exact details outlined. That should satisfy the house that the matter will be dealt with. I do not think it is the intention of the official opposition—and certainly it is not our intention—to hold up passage of the bill at this time. It is important that people in the area affected should have the assurance that immediate action is being taken.

Then, there is one further matter I would bring to the attention of the minister, as well as to that of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Just a few days ago I left Europe. I noted that before I took the aircraft at Prestwick in Scotland I was requested to make a declaration that I had not been in an area in which foot-and-mouth disease was prevalent. Before I was permitted to disembark from that aircraft in Iceland the Icelandic authorities demanded that they be given a signed statement from all passengers who were disembarking for only a short time that they had not been in such infected areas. Otherwise those passengers would not have been allowed to disembark, even for only a few moments.

No similar precaution was taken upon my entering Canada. I was not asked here whether I had been in any area in Europe where the foot-and-mouth disease was prevalent. We hear the report that the disease was brought in by an immigrant, although that has not yet been clearly established. It seems probable however that this is so. We have had an extensive immigration from Holland and Germany in the past year, although we know that the disease in question is prevalent in both those countries. I doubt whether any proper precautionary measures were taken when those immigrants from Germany, Holland and other European countries entered Canada, or whether any investigation was made as to whether they had been in areas in which that disease has existed for some considerable time.

Those people have been going to our farms. From information I have it is my belief that

[Mr. Wright.]

there has been neglect or, let us say, carelessness, in not keeping a closer check on immigrants coming to Canada. We have known about the seriousness of the disease. We realize that the livestock industry is one of the basic industries of our country; and with this information in mind I say every precaution should have been taken to protect our industry from this scourge.

The second point I would place before the minister refers to the contents of the bill itself. I believe we can leave it to the minister and to the board to see that fair compensation is paid. If it is not paid, then most certainly there will be plenty of criticism during the process of the settlement of claims. However, the bill, as I read it, makes no provision for any compensation whatever to those who, while not directly affected by the disease, are in the area and are going to suffer serious financial loss as a result of the quarantine provisions. Before the bill is passed I would ask the minister to tell us whether these other people who, as I say, will be seriously inconvenienced and will suffer financial loss, are to receive compensation for that loss, despite the fact that their herds or farms may not be directly affected, and none of their property destroyed.

These people will suffer serious loss, and I would hope that before the bill passes the minister would tell us that the board to be set up will have authority to deal with this matter. As I read the bill it does not now contain such authority, and unless the minister will say that such authority is contained within it, I suggest he should be prepared to offer an amendment whereby it would be given.

These matters will arise because there are people in the area who have dairy herds and who will not be permitted to market their milk. There are others who will not be permitted to market their hogs. So far as the hog situation is concerned, I think the regulations to be passed will be helpful. However, they will not solve the problem completely. I am sure the minister will agree that, at best, we will have reached January 1, 1953, before we will be able to lift the embargo now placed on this area.

In the meantime the stock will have to remain on the farms. I say the bill should contain authority whereby the board to be appointed could give compensation to those who will suffer financial loss, although their property may not be destroyed.

These are the two points I wanted to bring to the attention of the government. First, I do not think proper precautions are being taken so far as immigrants are concerned.