

*Supply—Agriculture*

**Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** I think this is rather important from the point of view of the livestock producers. Do I understand that cattle which were healthy were treated with the vaccine for hemorrhagic septicaemia and then either en route or after arriving at their destination 73 of them died?

**Mr. Harris:** That is right.

**Mr. McIvor:** That is what he said.

Item agreed to.

## Terminal services—

554. Freight assistance on western feed grains—further amount required, \$2,000,000.

**Mr. Pearkes:** This item brings the amount for freight assistance up to \$19,500,000, I believe, by adding the \$2 million to the original vote. I presume this amount is necessary because it has been decided to do away with the reduction in freight assistance announced earlier this session and restore the assistance paid on feed grains to British Columbia. If that is so, I should like to take this opportunity to thank the minister for having corrected the mistake made earlier this session. Of course, if it is not I would ask the minister to explain exactly what this amount is required for.

**Mr. Harris:** I should like to be the recipient of the good wishes of the hon. member but I am afraid I cannot be. This is in fact another \$2 million that will be needed for the payment of feed grain subsidies in the year ending next week. It merely indicates that the original vote of \$17 million was not sufficient for that purpose and that there has been a much greater demand on the vote than has been the case in former years. This item is for the purpose of providing the extra money we expect to spend before the books are closed for this year.

**Mr. Herridge:** Like the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich, my constituency is very interested in the question of freight assistance on western feed grains. Since the government announced its change of policy I have been flooded with letters from poultry producers, dairymen, farmers' institutes and other agricultural organizations all expressing dismay at the government's change of policy and urging reconsideration. They have asked me to try to melt the minister's heart. It is a very serious matter for many of the poultry producers and dairymen in my constituency particularly because they live under somewhat unusual circumstances. They do not enjoy the good transportation and other facilities that exist in many places on the prairies.

One letter I received from the secretary of the Fauquier farmers' institute brings to my attention particularly what the loss of the \$5 a ton means to the producers of the Arrow lakes area. The secretary advises me that egg prices have been at the lowest level for some years, an average of 16 cents per dozen lower than 1953. These two conditions are province-wide and that is the reason for the province-wide complaint from British Columbia with respect to the reduction in freight assistance. In the district I represent there are certain other difficulties that are more or less local. As a result of the loss of the C.P.R. steamship service on the Arrow lakes, it costs the farmers of that area \$5 a ton more to move their grain by means of the present service than it did last year. In addition, certain other difficulties have arisen because of the change in service.

I am not going to delay the committee except to say that this is a serious situation for many dairymen and poultry producers in my constituency and will have serious effects on them in making a satisfactory livelihood. Because of the pioneer conditions under which some of them live it will mean complete bankruptcy. Therefore I do ask the minister to bring my remarks to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to see if something cannot be done to restore at least partially the assistance which has been so helpful to these pioneer producers in the years past.

**Mr. Hahn:** Earlier in the year I spoke at some length on the question of freight assistance. I was hoping, as did the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich, that the minister had prevailed upon the Minister of Agriculture to let him include \$2 million for freight assistance on feed grain for the people of the west and British Columbia. I seriously hope that the Minister of Agriculture will look into this whole question to see if we cannot find some way of assisting these agricultural people in British Columbia. I can only repeat what I said before in respect to the need, and the fact that the prices received by the farmers are low while the cost of feed is high, making it practically impossible for these people to remain in business in the lower mainland area.

I know the minister is aware of the situation, and I know only too well that if he had the money available he would say, "I see no better place in Canada to put it than in British Columbia". I am looking forward to the time when he can make some money available to assist us in the way we believe we should be assisted.

**Mr. Charlton:** The item in the estimates last year was \$17 million, and that amount was