

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Production service—

Health of animals—

546. To provide for payment of compensation to owners of animals affected with diseases coming under the Animal Contagious Diseases Act, which have died or have been slaughtered in circumstances not covered by the above act and regulations made thereunder, all as detailed in the estimates, \$1,215.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): Would the Minister of Agriculture care to make a statement on this first item?

Mr. Gardiner: Well, it is as stated in the supplementary estimates:

To provide for payment of compensation to owners of animals affected with diseases coming under the Animal Contagious Diseases Act, which have died or have been slaughtered in circumstances not covered by the above act and regulations made thereunder, all as detailed in the estimates.

As is understood, there is usually about \$6 million spent under this item, and the total amount here is just for some instances where animals died under circumstances not provided for; that is, died prior to the time they had been properly inspected under the act, but it was afterwards found that they should be paid for in accordance with the principle of the act and therefore payments were made.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): Have any payments been made since last year for the destruction of sheep which might have had scrapie? I think the committee will recall that last year quite a considerable payment was made out under a similar item of the minister's estimates, and I wonder whether the minister can tell the committee if any further outbreaks have taken place?

Mr. Gardiner: No, Mr. Chairman, there have been no further outbreaks.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): There have been certain rumours—I cannot say offhand how well-founded they are—in respect to the sheep which were destroyed last year. Can the minister tell the committee some of the facts in relation to the destruction of those sheep last year? Can the minister inform the committee as to the date when the department first became aware that there was scrapie in the flock of P. J. Rock, which was subsequently destroyed under the supervision of his department? Can the minister give the committee that information?

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Mr. Gardiner: I am sorry. In view of the fact that there have been no outbreaks and no payments made this year I have not any information with regard to scrapie beyond what I gave last year and that, of course, is on the record. I do not remember the exact date, but it was some considerable time before the action finally had to be taken. The first news we received—and I am now speaking entirely from memory; I would have to go back and check to be entirely certain—was from somewhere down in Massachusetts where some breeder had bought an animal which came from the flock of Mr. Rock, and the animal did develop the disease. It was not known just whether or not it had been carried from that flock, but the necessary investigations were made and it was finally determined that it probably had come from that flock, and then action was taken which resulted in the slaughtering of a considerable number of the animals.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): Some of us who showed interest in this matter last year would like to get some further information from the minister if he is prepared to see whether he can get it for the committee. I wanted to try to get the minister to say when his departmental officials first investigated prior to the destruction of the P. J. Rock flock. Can the minister give us the date?

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Chairman, I would say again that the proper place to bring up that question is on my general estimates, when we shall have all the information here with regard to matters of that kind. This is not the place to bring it up, and I do not think it is the place to properly discuss this particular matter.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): Throughout Canada there has been an increased interest in this matter. Last year I know I felt that the government had certainly used a lot of public money in the destruction of this flock and had paid Mr. Rock, who had a very valuable flock of sheep, over \$100,000. At this time I am not trying to argue whether or not the amount was excessive, but I do think there are some matters in connection with it that should be cleared up in this house and throughout the country. Last year certain information was given to the committee. In order to have a proper discussion of it, as the minister says, we should have detailed information. Before the minister should come to this committee and ask that further moneys be appropriated by this committee for him to spend under this section of the act we should have further information. I should like to know the date