

Foot-and-mouth disease

foot-and-mouth disease prevails are properly examined and that proper precautions are taken to see that this disease is not brought to Canada. The particular immigrant who is suspected of bringing this disease to Canada was on the farm in question as late as November 21. Five days later the disease broke out. Approximately a week later evidence was brought to the federal authorities that a disease had broken out on this farm. Yet for eleven weeks nothing was done to discover who might have carried that disease or to see that the spread of the disease was prevented. I am certainly glad that this whole question will be referred to the standing committee on agriculture so that we may find out the reason for all the delay, and so that steps may be taken to see that similar delay does not happen in the future.

I am concerned about this disease, not only because it provides a grave threat to the livestock industry throughout Canada, but because my position is similar to that of the hon. member for Lake Centre and that of the Minister of Agriculture in that part of the quarantine area is within my constituency. The minister has said that the area affected is not large. It is fifty miles long and fifty miles wide, which gives an area of some 2,500 square miles. In it, I do not know how many farms are infected. I have seen figures which indicated 25 or 30. There are probably over 2,000 farmers within that quarantine area. We want adequate compensation on the one hand for the farmer who has cattle that are infected, and we also want proper compensation for farmers in the quarantine area who are losing income because some neighbouring farms are infected with this disease.

I am wondering what the government is doing in the way of considering other possible losses to farmers within that area, farmers who do not have the disease on their farms, but who have a lot of damp grain on their farms. What kind of compensation will the government give these farmers if it should happen, as I hope it does not, that the damp grain should spoil in the spring with the continuation of the quarantine? There are many other losses with regard to this disease. If the quarantine is kept in effect for some months, if farmers are unable to market their cattle, then certain numbers of these cattle that have already passed a fair market weight and are already in good market condition must be maintained at the expense of the farmer without the farmer obtaining any more for them when he is finally able to sell them.

The announcement made by the Minister of Agriculture this morning in relation to changing the weight specifications for grades of hogs was a step in the right direction. I think that should be fair compensation to hog producers, provided the quarantine does not last too long. If a farmer has to keep a hog that is of market weight for a further few months he will not be penalized because he has placed another fifty or a hundred pounds weight on that hog. But I think the measure that we are asked to support and pass at this time is certainly not nearly specific enough. In my opinion the farmers should be guaranteed the minimum compensation, and should receive that guarantee from this legislation. It is not enough to say that we will do whatever is fair and reasonable.

Mr. Gardiner: May I suggest that the minimum is what is already in the act, and anything that this legislation provides is something in addition to that.

Mr. Argue: In other words, the minimum is \$40. That is the minimum if there is a trench dug and the carcasses are put in the trench.

Mr. Gardiner: That is not the minimum. The minimum is the commercial value of that animal, plus the \$40.

Mr. Argue: Of course there is no commercial value of the animal when it is in the trench. That is the whole point.

Mr. Gardiner: No, that is not the interpretation. The interpretation that is put on that, as Ontario farmers know in connection with tuberculosis, is that the animal is valued at what it would have brought if it had been delivered on the market. That is its commercial value and the \$40 is paid in addition to that.

Mr. Argue: Well, why does the minister not put the same kind of provision in this legislation?

Mr. Gardiner: It is already in the Animal Contagious Diseases Act. That provision is in there, and this is an addition to what is in there.

Mr. Argue: It does not say anything of the kind. I will read the clause to the minister:

Notwithstanding anything in the Animal Contagious Diseases Act, the Minister of Agriculture may order that fair and reasonable compensation be paid to the owners of animals slaughtered by reason of the existence in Canada of foot-and-mouth disease, such compensation to be determined in the manner prescribed by regulations to be made by the governor in council, after a report by a board of valuers to be appointed by the governor in council.

Mr. Gardiner: It means just exactly what I said. Notwithstanding the fact that that act