

Foot-and-mouth disease

When I see the pictures of an immigrant being run back and forth across Canada I ask myself, would it not have been easier to take his clothes and shoes and make an analysis without all this marching here and there? If any indications of the disease is found on him without any admissions on his part, what agency of government will be able to say that he did not get this virus on his clothing while he worked on the farm? To me it is just a lot of movement back and forth in order to divert the attention of the Canadian people from a most serious situation and from responsibilities which, so far as the farmers in the west are concerned, will result in terrible losses as time goes on.

Ontario and Quebec can build up embargoes by agreement between themselves. Since Ontario produces more than it needs, and Quebec requires a good deal of the production of Ontario in order to maintain the necessary meat supply, they will be able to work out an arrangement between themselves; but we in the west are in a position which is dangerous to our economy. A large measure of the responsibility for that situation in my opinion must rest upon the government for its failure to act.

Today a bill for compensation is produced. Like the leader of the opposition, I am in entire agreement with the purpose of it and the need of its being passed; but it is a model of uncertainty. There is nothing in it to indicate what the farmer will get. There is no basis upon which the determination will be made. There is nothing to determine the difference in price between the ordinary animal and the purebred animal. Surely the principle upon which will be based the amount that the farmers will receive for their animals that are destroyed should be set forth in the bill and not left to order in council.

I did not see this bill until a few minutes ago, and my analysis therefore is not what it might be with some preparation. I read:

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—

The Animal Contagious Diseases Act—I speak from memory, because I have not looked at it—provides for payment of from \$40 in respect of ordinary cattle to \$100 in respect of purebred cattle, in addition to the commercial value of the carcass. This legislation does not determine what the farmer

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

who has purebred cattle will receive. The bill goes on to say:

—such compensation to be determined in the manner prescribed by regulations to be made by the governor in council,—

Let parliament know what the basis is to be. I continue:

—and after a report by a board of valuers to be appointed by the governor in council.

In the compensation that is to be paid parliament should not permit the board of evaluators to say that one farmer may receive one figure and another man another figure. Let it be set forth in general that the purebred cattle producer shall receive economic value, and that commercial cattle—cattle which are produced for sale and not for breeding and other purposes—shall have their sale valuation. To place in the hands of the minister or in the power of the governor in council the right to determine this valuation—with a board of evaluators set up, with the hired man responsible to the boss—leaves altogether too much power in the hands of the Minister of Agriculture.

The next paragraph reads:

The Minister of Agriculture may also order that fair and reasonable compensation, to be determined as provided in subsection one, shall be paid in respect of any buildings, fodder, grain or other things ordered to be destroyed.

The same argument applies to that. I suggest that the principle of the measure of compensation be set forth in general within the bill. Then the question of the determination of other incidental matters may be left to order in council. Let me read—

Mr. Gardiner: What do you suggest the maximum amount should be?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Since I have referred to this matter, perhaps I should read a letter I have before me as an example. There would be no objection to that. This is from Adams, Saskatchewan—

Mr. Gardiner: I should like to ask a question. What do you suggest the maximum compensation should be?

Mr. Diefenbaker: I would suggest that the valuation of breeding stock should be the valuation that is actually there, rather than—

Mr. Abbott: By whom?

Mr. Diefenbaker: If we place ourselves, in parliament, under this measure, in a position where compensation is uncertain, and if the farmer with purebred stock is to get the commercial value, then we are not going to invite the assistance of farmers in western Canada so that when their cattle are attacked by disease they will bring the matter to the attention of the department outside the area