

among the ten provincial premiers or attorneys general to prevent, if they can, the importation of wines from the United States. It is true they are not endeavouring to do this under any import regulation, but the simple refusal to buy the wine has the same effect as a tariff. This situation has been in existence in British Columbia for a number of years now, and it is creating considerable ill feeling with our neighbours to the south. If you want to export you have to import, and I merely mention this because in my opinion the provinces are actually interfering with the right of the dominion.

It may seem strange to hear a senator take this stand. It has been said that it is the duty of the Senate to protect the rights of the provinces, and here I am drawing attention to the fact that the provinces are interfering with what I believe to be a federal right. These things are sometimes passed by as though they did not amount to a great deal; but such a practice can grow once a precedent is established. Provinces are made up of human beings, and if one province thinks another has been a little too severe in shutting out some kind of produce, it may want to take retaliatory measures.

I have no objection to the bill before us, and I think it should be put through without delay so that the farmers may be compensated for their cattle which have been destroyed. I wish to commend the government for introducing this measure, and for the steps it has already taken to prevent the spread of this most serious of all cattle diseases.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck: Honourable senators, I wish to see this bill passed without delay, and if this is done it will be in marked contrast to what has taken place elsewhere.

There is a question which I wish to ask of the sponsor of the bill.

Section 1 of the bill reads as follows:

The Minister of Agriculture may cause any animal to be slaughtered where he deems it necessary in order to prevent the spreading of or to extirpate the present outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Canada.

This bill has not yet been passed, so under what authority is the slaughtering going on now? Why is it necessary to give the Minister of Agriculture this power? If authority is required to deal with the present outbreak, then it is also required to deal with any other outbreak that may occur. I do not understand this first section at all.

Hon. Mr. Robertson: I am unable to give the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck) an authoritative answer,

and I think such questions as this could be dealt with in committee. I am advised that there is not likely to be a Royal Assent before six o'clock, and I think that in the meantime some senators might like an opportunity to ask pertinent questions.

I might add that I understand this legislation is of a temporary nature, that it will not be needed for any great length of time.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: That is true as to its compensatory features.

Hon. Mr. Robertson: On the first question my honourable friend asked me, as to power to order slaughtering, I fancy the minister has that power now under the Animal Contagious Diseases Act; but of course the bill before us would enable him to take much more drastic measures than are contemplated under that Act.

Hon. W. M. Aseltine: Honourable senators, perhaps I should make a few remarks on this bill before it goes to committee. I agree pretty well with what has been stated by the leader of the Senate (Hon. Mr. Robertson) and the senator from Blaine Lake (Hon. Mr. Horner) and others who have spoken, and I am particularly interested in the question asked by the senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck). The point he raised is one on which I think we should be enlightened before the bill is passed. We want to know if the words "the present outbreak of foot and mouth disease" would apply as well to an outbreak six months from now. Although I am willing to facilitate passage of the bill, I feel that before it goes through we should be given answers to a few pertinent questions.

Most of us have no doubt followed the debate on the bill in the other house. Complaint was made there that the government had been lax in ascertaining that the disease from which cattle in Saskatchewan were suffering was the dread foot and mouth disease. However, I do not see how we can gain anything by going into that now. I understand that the Minister of Agriculture has promised that a parliamentary committee will be set up promptly to investigate how the disease started and why it was not correctly diagnosed earlier. That committee may consist of members of the Commons only or it may be a joint committee, composed of members of both houses. I may say here that I have no wish to repeat the experience I had last fall as a member of a joint committee, of which the senator from Provencher (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) was Joint Chairman. I do not think that we had an opportunity to investigate what we set out to investigate,