

Supply—Agriculture

Federation of Agriculture entitled: "Farmers meet the Cabinet". On page 5 I find this:

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Chairman, you have already ruled on the point but I would suggest that you do so again. This estimate reads:

Compensation for animals slaughtered under the Animal Contagious Diseases Act; and additional compensation in conformity with the terms of the act for the control and extirpation of foot-and-mouth disease—further amount required.

There is no mention that this item has to do with settling the problems that my hon. friend is discussing. The item is only for the purpose of paying for these animals and paying for tools or buildings, or something of that kind, destroyed as a result of the orders under Bill No. 7.

Mr. Wright: Before you rule, Mr. Chairman, I should point out that that is just exactly what the hon. member for Assiniboia is arguing. He is arguing that this is entirely inadequate.

Mr. Gardiner: It has nothing to do with what he is talking about.

Mr. Wright: Surely when the minister brings in a vote the committee has a right to argue as to whether it is adequate or not. That is what the hon. member for Assiniboia is doing. He is pointing out that this vote is inadequate to serve the purpose for which it is intended.

Mr. Gardiner: There is nothing to indicate that this vote has anything to do with the matters about which my hon. friend is speaking. If these things are to be done, and if any money is required, it will not be taken care of by this vote.

Mr. Wright: That is what we are arguing.

Mr. Gardiner: Of course, and therefore you should not be arguing it on this vote at all.

Mr. Argue: Before you rule, Mr. Chairman, I should like to point out that it is almost a month now since parliament discussed the foot-and-mouth outbreak. I am sure that since that time the Minister of Agriculture has received a great many representations from agricultural organizations across the country, relating to the subject of foot-and-mouth disease and to the government's action of paying certain compensation in relation thereto. The agricultural committee will not be meeting until after the Easter recess. This is the only opportunity we have had for a month, and it will possibly be the only opportunity which we shall have for almost another month, to bring to the attention of the minister the thoughts of the farmers in relation to this emergency. I shall bow to whatever ruling you may make, Mr. Chairman, but because of the seriousness of the

[Mr. Argue.]

situation and because of the representations that all of us have received from such organizations as the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Alberta Federation of Agriculture, the wheat pool organization and others, I feel the minister should allow us to make our representations to him before this item is passed.

Mr. Blackmore: Before you make your ruling, Mr. Chairman, I should like to say just a word in support of the position that the hon. member for Assiniboia is taking. I shall endeavour to be as brief as possible, but this matter is dreadfully important to the people all through the areas I represent. Just as an example, I should like to read a telegram which I received just a day or so ago.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. What the hon. member is about to read certainly has no bearing on the point of order upon which I am about to rule. If he wants to speak to the point of order raised by the Minister of Agriculture I will listen to him.

Mr. Blackmore: The important point is just as the hon. member for Assiniboia is making. The situation is completely chaotic in respect of prices all through the area that I represent. This is largely due to the fact that there has been no definite announcement by the government as to whether any money is going to be set aside to aid in the maintenance of floor prices. The feed lots are full and before long cattle will have to be marketed and if some provision is not made the losses will simply be disastrous all through that area.

This telegram sets forth a condition which four thousand members of an organization concentrated in Lethbridge realize exists. They are making a protest against the failure to deal with it. It looks to me as though this telegram certainly has a bearing on the general question.

I grant that what the minister has said is true, that no provision is made in this particular item for the maintenance of floor prices. But I maintain that that provision ought to be in this item. The fact that it is not there constitutes a condemnation of the government's indifference in dealing with this problem. I think you can call it only indifference because certainly the matter of floor prices under beef, hogs and all these various commodities which are affected by this foot-and-mouth disease constitutes a serious part of the responsibility of the government at this time.

I bow to your ruling, Mr. Chairman, but I certainly protest against the fact that no