

*Foot-and-mouth disease*

At an appropriate time I will deal at length with the discovery and detection of the disease in the Regina district. At the moment I only wish to say that as soon as there was any suspicion that the vesicular malady discovered in that area might be foot-and-mouth disease, an area sufficiently large to take in all known cases was quarantined by the veterinary director general under the authority of the Animal Contagious Diseases Act, and every recent movement of cattle out of the area has been traced.

At this point I would like to emphasize the fact that this area is very small, only fifty miles square, constituting about one-fiftieth of the settled portion of the province of Saskatchewan. I wanted to emphasize that because while this disease requires that sufficient publicity be given to it, I am afraid the publicity in this instance has been such as to give the impression that the disease is much more widespread in Canada than the facts known up to the moment would indicate. There are about twenty-three cases of the disease which have been established. They are all within an area fifty miles square surrounding the city of Regina, which is at about the centre of the area. It has been rumoured that the disease has been found in other parts of the country. We have checked all those rumours, and up to the present have found no cases outside that area. I am very glad to be able to say that so far the disease does not seem to have spread outside the quarantine area, and that within the area itself there have been no new cases for several days. Every rumour of an outbreak outside the area is at once checked and a quarantine imposed if there is suspicion.

As soon as the existence of foot-and-mouth disease was suspected, the government also notified the United States authorities and a United States veterinarian was on location immediately. Not only did we wish to have the advantage of the skilled assistance of the United States bureau of animal industry, which has had long experience in Mexico where there have been serious outbreaks in recent years, but we also wished to assure the United States government that everything possible was being done to stamp out the disease, if indeed it proved to be the foot-and-mouth variety.

On Sunday last our laboratories at Hull notified us that the vesicular malady was definitely foot-and-mouth disease, and on the following day a public announcement was made to that effect. It was also announced that the infected animals and those which might have been in contact with

the disease were being destroyed, the farmers compensated, and the affected farms disinfected. These operations are now under way.

Meanwhile, as we knew would happen, the United States government imposed an embargo on the shipment from Canada of live cattle, sheep and swine, and fresh killed or frozen meat from these animals. The shipment of hay and straw, and of certain animal products, is also made subject to certain restrictions. The details of these regulations are available, and I shall not attempt to elaborate them at this time. The United States government made it clear, however, that the embargo does not apply to grains.

This embargo and these other restrictions have been imposed under mandatory United States legislation, which has been in effect for many years.

As far as the United States administration is concerned, there is no discretion to restrict the embargo to areas or regions, that is the act does not provide them with discretion to pick out certain areas. The embargo must apply to the whole country. Under the United States law the embargo cannot be lifted until the Secretary of Agriculture gives notice that the disease no longer exists in the foreign country. We have also been advised that, under the order issued by the United States bureau of animal industry applying to Canada, the embargo cannot be lifted for a period of sixty days after Canada has been declared free of foot-and-mouth disease.

I think I should say that ever since the outbreak of the disease was suspected the United States authorities have been most sympathetic and helpful, and I am convinced that they are as anxious as we are to bring this scourge under control and to see normal trade resumed with a minimum of delay.

While I am hopeful that the action taken will be fully successful, there is no doubt that some losses will be incurred before the disease is eliminated and the embargo on movement to the United States removed. Farmers whose livestock have to be destroyed will, as I have already said, be compensated. In addition, the government is not unmindful of the serious losses that may result from the interference in the sale of livestock and animal products to the United States.

The situation is being watched carefully and as further measures to protect the interests of producers are required these will be brought into effect. What form these measures should take, if they prove to be required, has been inquired into.