

person. For instance, we have located in Vancouver various offices for the different branches of agriculture. One man told me it would take him a full day to visit all those offices if it were necessary for him to do so, because they are in different parts of the city. A man who wanted information regarding the importation of wheat went to the health of animals office and asked with what conditions he had to comply before importing. The answer was that as long as it came in new sacks it would be allowed in. The result was that a very considerable shipment of wheat was made, complying with this provision for new sacks, but when it arrived at Vancouver it could not be unloaded, because in the first instance the man had not gone also to the entomological branch. He should have gone there also and inquired what regulations they had governing importations. These provided that it was necessary to have a certificate from the Australian authorities to the effect that the shipment was free from flax smut.

That is the general line along which we are working in connection with the reorganization of the health of animals branch and live stock branch. The one guiding principle is that there shall be full discussion of every related question, and only after that shall we do what we decide is in the best interests of the live stock industry without lowering its efficiency.

Mr. BROWN: I am glad the minister has announced his policy of giving consideration to local practitioners. It is a matter of serious concern in farming communities today that under present conditions we are threatened with losing the services of our skilled veterinary surgeons. The increasing use of the automobile and the prevailing hard times have made it very difficult for local veterinary surgeons to live decently, and I believe it would be in the interests of the department as well as of the rural communities that the services of these men should be utilized as far as possible in doing departmental work. I believe the work could be done as efficiently by these men as by any others, and we would be assured that rural communities would not be deprived of a very necessary service. I know veterinary surgeons have felt the matter very keenly. I have had representations from a number of them asking that the testing of cattle for the establishment of restricted areas might be committed to their care. If a man kept himself abreast of the times, there is no reason why he should not be able to perform the work as efficiently as the men sent out by the department.

Mr. McKENZIE (Assiniboia): Like the hon. member for Lisgar, I heard the report that there was to be a merger between the health of animals and the live stock branch. I am pleased to hear the minister's explanation. What I am about to say I do not think I need direct particularly to the minister, because I know he is very much interested in the live stock industry. I wish merely to draw attention to the importance of the health of animals branch. This is a branch which after a great many years has been built up. It was begun by Doctor Rutherford a number of years ago, and through his efforts an efficient staff and organization has been created. I believe if there is any change in or interference with the work of the health of animals branch it will be resented throughout the country.

A moment ago the minister said he had had representations stating that laymen should not be placed in charge. I realize that that is so, and that only the most qualified veterinary surgeons should do the work of the health of animals branch, or be at the head of it. I should like to turn to the report of the Minister of Agriculture for last year. At page 87, with reference to the foot and mouth disease, he states the following:

Foot and mouth disease continues to be prevalent on the continent of Europe and in many other parts of the world, and the insidious nature of this infection makes it necessary to take the strictest precautions to exclude it from Canada.

Foot and mouth disease has never prevailed in Canada. There have been many outbreaks in the United States at various times, but it has never been allowed to come into Canada. Hon. members who have the report of the minister may read at page 88 some of the precautions taken during the last outbreak to prevent the germ entering Canada. I do not believe the precautions were unnecessary, by any means, because this is a most virulent disease. I attended a veterinary college and graduated about thirty years ago, and I want to say to the minister that I do not agree with him when he states that young men should be encouraged to go into the rural districts and try to make a living from a veterinary practice, because the ones who are in practice are finding it very difficult to exist under present conditions. Twenty-five or thirty years ago in the part of the country in which I was practising it was quite common for me to run into a case of glanders. I have known twenty or thirty horses to be killed by that disease in a small district inside of one year. Around