

Russell went further; he said that the law should be made retroactive. I mention these hon. gentlemen because it is obvious that every one of them criticized the late government. When the hon. member for St. Johns-Iberville, in May of this year, said that cattle had been slaughtered in his own county and that the farmers had not received a just compensation, there can be no doubt in the mind of anyone that the hon. gentleman was criticizing the late administration and the former Minister of Agriculture. And when the hon. member for Russell says that the law should be retroactive, what is he aiming at? The hon. member for Russell was on this side of the house, a member of this house, when the animals in his county were slaughtered. But he never rose in his place to defend the farmers. Why? Because his party was then in power. Now, however, when the Conservatives are in power, he wants to have the law made retroactive so as to remedy the wrongs done by the government which he supported.

The hon. member for Willow Bunch has told us a few of the good things which the former Minister of Agriculture did. Well, let me tell some of the things that he did do. When the hon. member for Melville took the portfolio of Minister of Agriculture what was the law in regard to compensation for cattle slaughtered? The maximum indemnity in 1921 was \$250 for pure-bred cattle and \$80 for grade cattle. Was the hon. gentleman satisfied with that? No.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I was here in 1922.

Mr. GOBEIL: The hon. gentleman thought the farmers were getting too much and when he got into power he reduced the maximum compensation paid to \$200 for pure bred and \$60 for grade cattle. That was something. He liked the farmers so well that he did not think that was good enough; so in 1923, the following year, he had to do something more for them. He reduced still further the compensation which they were being paid; he fixed it at \$150 for pure bred and \$60 for grade cattle. That was something else he did for the farmers. He met with a good deal of criticism, and I myself heard a lot of it. Two or three years later he had a generous impulse. The number of pure bred cattle provided for, under the accredited herd system was ten, and in order to meet the criticism of the people he reduced the number to five. That was in 1925. However, he did not leave it at that figure very long, for in 1928 he again restored the number to ten. But he made his regulations somewhat more

[Mr. Gobeil.]

rigid than before. He decided that even if a man had ten head of pure bred cattle he should not be allowed to come under the accredited herd system unless that number represented one-third of his herd. Moreover, the cattle had to be at least six months old, and the bull at the head of the herd twelve months. He made the regulations more severe. That was how much he loved the farmers. But the hon. gentleman decided that he had to do something more. Until that time the compensation had been paid for every head of cattle slaughtered; but the hon. member for Melville considered this a little too generous and so he sent out a circular letter in which he said that thereafter there would be no compensation for steers. So that all farmers raising steers found themselves excluded from the accredited herd system; if they did come under it they ran the risk of having their cattle slaughtered without compensation.

Now I have given these figures to show the unfairness of the criticism that has been made against this government. When the hon. member for Laprairie-Napierville and the hon. member for St. Johns-Iberville criticized this government in connection with this item, were they not criticizing the leader of the opposition? During the nine years the right hon. gentleman was in power his government kept reducing the compensation and making the regulations gradually more rigid, so that fewer farmers could take advantage of the system. Is it fair, therefore, for them to accuse this government of delays and of not doing its duty? Is it fair for them to suggest that if the Liberal party had remained in power at Ottawa Premier Taschereau would not have had to pass a law for the compensation of the farmers of Quebec?

Speaking of the generosity of hon. gentlemen opposite, in 1929 the legislative assembly of Quebec passed a resolution authorizing the government of that province to communicate with the federal government with a view to fixing a more reasonable compensation for farmers whose cattle were slaughtered under the act. Now the hon. member for Laprairie-Napierville comes before this house and accuses this government of failure to do its duty, saying that if the Liberal party had remained in power Mr. Taschereau would not have had to do what he did. Well, for three years Mr. Taschereau did practically nothing, though his friends were in power at Ottawa. But when the Conservatives are in power at Ottawa and he faces the electors of Quebec then he passes a little law offering some compensation to the farmers. I quite understand that hon. members are anxious to have this and