

Supply—Agriculture

nothing at all. One does not know how many animals were purebred cows, how many were calves and the like. You could even include the goat in that, and say that was one of the animals and therefore arrive at a basis of valuation.

I cannot understand why the minister is having so much difficulty in answering a simple question. Was there a uniform basis of evaluation for these various classifications to which I have referred? Is the basis of evaluation generally that suggested by this committee of farmers? At the moment, I am not asking for individual cases, although there is no reason why this house should not have that information, because whenever there is money distributed we are always in a position to ask how much went to each person and the basis of evaluation. We are not doing that at the moment. We are not endeavouring in any way to play one farmer against another. We do have a right to know that there is a basis of evaluation with equality, so far as is practicable, and that is being followed in the awards made. When replying, I asked the minister to give the committee the facts as to how this \$200,000 item is made up, particularly how many bushels of feed will be destroyed or has been destroyed in order to meet this situation, and also the basis of evaluation for the cattle.

After all, the information that I received from the farmers is that they were under the impression they were asked to give a basis of evaluation, which they did. They are asking whether or not that was followed, because certainly they wish to have a uniform system of compensation followed, and that each and every one of them be paid as uniformly as possible, due regard being had for the difference in value that must necessarily exist as between the different herds.

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Chairman, as to the main part of the question having to do with the division of this money in order to make certain payments, the only one that has been determined up to the moment is the value of the livestock. No values have yet been placed on the feed. No values have been placed on the buildings that may have to be destroyed, if any, and no valuation has been placed on anything of that kind. The valuations have been placed on the livestock, and that is what the farmers themselves wanted to get settled first. There is some discussion among them as to whether you should trim down the stack, take off the outside and destroy that, or whether it would not pay everybody better to burn the whole stack. Questions of that kind have not yet been determined. When they are determined, we

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

shall then be able to arrive at some conclusion as to what the values are. But those valuations have not been made yet, and I therefore cannot give them. It is only a matter of more or less accident that we have the other table before us at this time. What I mean is that if it had been two days ago or three days ago that we had been considering the question, we would not have had any information on that matter and I would have simply had to say: We figure that the total amount in this estimate will cover the whole cost. It will be seen by examining the figures alone, along with the figures I have given, that we are not far away from the estimate in what has been the total amount that will be required. As to the method by which the values of the animals were determined, it is true that there was this suggestion made—at the request, I think, of the board—by the individuals who were concerned as to what they themselves thought the value of their animals was.

Mr. Diefenbaker: At the meeting?

Mr. Gardiner: At the meeting that was referred to. As a matter of fact, I have sent out for the same letter. It just appeared on my desk this evening since I had left the house at six o'clock. I read it over rather hurriedly. In that letter it was stated that this proposal was made. They say that what actually happened was this. They had that information; they had the advice of the four inspectors, two of whom represented stock producers and the other two of whom were men that we considered most valuable in connection with an exploration of that kind, one being Mr. Jack Byers whom I think most western members know even if eastern members do not. He was one of the two men from our staff who was appointed. These four men and the board of three took the representations made by these farmers as to what the values ought to be, went over them all, then set a scale that they themselves thought was a reasonable one to be followed, and they followed that scale throughout and made the valuations which are included in this table. I hardly expect that hon. members would want them recited here tonight. I do not think it would be wise to recite the list even if I had it here. I have sent out to try to get a copy, but I have some doubt as to whether I should recite the figures under the circumstances existing at this time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Why is that?

Mr. Gardiner: Simply because the matter has not been finally settled with the individuals. To start throwing around here with regard to individual animals amounts which might be questioned and might be discussed