

*Foot-and-mouth disease*

the board. On Friday evening, I think it was, I listened to a radio broadcast following the news in which Mr. Beatty was being interviewed on how he first discovered this disease and what were his future plans. He gave the history of the development of his herd, and said that from now on he certainly was through with the cattle business. Many others who will not have their herds slaughtered feel the same way about it. They believe they are taking too much of a chance, and I fear for the future of this great industry if the government does not act very quickly.

When it comes to fixing the value of an animal, that will not be so difficult in connection with commercial cattle as it will be in the case of the man who is losing a purebred registered herd. Some of the prices that have been paid in recent years for herd sires and even for females have been fabulous, running into many thousands of dollars, as compared with a few hundred for the commercial animal. That in itself will give hon. members some idea of the difficulty the board will have in arriving at reasonable settlements for the loss of these animals.

I believe this bill gives very wide powers, and I should think that great caution would have to be observed. Again I want to say I am disappointed in the terms of this legislation. While the members of the committee are outstanding individuals, personally I am very disappointed as far as their personal knowledge of the livestock industry is concerned. In listening to the minister this morning I was also disappointed when he stated that this government was immediately placing an embargo on the importation of livestock and meat from the United States, after the statement on Friday afternoon by the Minister of Trade and Commerce in reply to a question by the hon. member for Melfort. It had been falsely reported in the press that this government intended to retaliate against the United States government by placing an embargo against dairy products and so on, and the Minister of Trade and Commerce replied that while the government was not satisfied with the way the United States had dealt with us in regard to food-stuffs we certainly would not retaliate in that way. I do not think the statement of the Minister of Agriculture today on behalf of the government was in keeping with the policy announced by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I believe the idea behind the announcement of the embargo was that this government did not wish to face up to the situation created by the imposition of provincial embargoes. Personally I regret those embargoes, yet I can understand the position of the provinces. As was pointed out by the hon. member for Nanaimo this afternoon,

British Columbia acted very quickly because they were afraid this disease might be brought into their province, and if it spread among the wildlife there it would be impossible to run down.

**Mr. MacDougall:** British Columbia always acts quickly.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** That is all to the good, but I think their action this time was quite unconstitutional. In any event, by acting in that way the provinces have increased the difficulties of the cattle producers as a whole, because when the United States authorities are considering this matter and find that we have provincial embargoes from coast to coast in this country, it will not make it any easier to get them to lift their embargo against our products once this difficulty is cleared up. I could not help thinking of the same thing this afternoon when the hon. member for Qu'Appelle was speaking. He said some of these diseased herds were in his riding. I know something of the Qu'Appelle valley. These herds near Regina are in the untimbered part of the country, but if that disease were to spread further down the valley, which is thickly populated with jumping deer and other wildlife, I do not know how it would ever be possible to stamp it out.

This is a very serious problem. For the information of the cattle producers of this country I hope the suggestion made this afternoon will be adopted and this whole question referred to the standing committee of this house on agriculture. I do not suggest that this bill should be held up until that time, but I would like that done so these officials may be called before the committee and this whole matter thoroughly ironed out. This afternoon my colleague the hon. member for Brant-Wentworth rendered both this house and the cattle producers a very great service in the scientific speech he made and the material he placed on record. He was very enlightening, and I think deserves great credit for his effort. If that can be followed up in the committee on agriculture I think a great deal of useful information may be obtained not only for those hon. members who are interested but more particularly for the cattle producers of this country.

Again I want to appeal to the government as earnestly as I can to take some action quite apart from the compensation of those who are losing their herds, to encourage the producers of purebred stock as well as the producers of commercial stock so they may carry on with some degree of confidence, in the knowledge that there will be at least a floor price. I think that is very important to this industry and to the economy of this nation.