

*Foot-and-mouth disease*

quote something of what the minister said last Friday, dealing with who was in charge in Saskatchewan:

Mr. Gardiner: It is the veterinarian who is at Saskatoon in connection with the university.

He went on to say he was not certain who it was.

Mr. Coldwell: That announcement was from your department?

Mr. Gardiner: No; it was from the university authority at Saskatoon where the virus is sent to be checked by those authorities who are in a position to check it and who have the facilities to do so. Most of our checking in Saskatchewan is done at the university, I think at the farm there. This checking was done in connection with these cases.

The minister definitely made the statement that the checking was done. I want to know when, and what were the results.

When it comes to dealing with the matter finally in order to determine whether it is foot-and-mouth disease, there is only one way in which it can be finally determined, as I understand it.

Then the minister went on to describe the situation concerning the serum, which has to be brought from England. As I said before, in order to diagnose the disease an injection into four animals is all that is necessary. In order to type it the serum is required; but in order to diagnose it, it is only necessary to inject four animals, a horse, a cow, a guinea pig and swine. That is all that is necessary to actually diagnose whether it is one of those three diseases. Vesicular stomatitis as a rule has more effect on horses than on cattle, but it very closely resembles foot-and-mouth disease. Then there is vesicular exanthema in swine, which also closely resembles foot-and-mouth disease. So those three diseases have to be diagnosed and a differentiation made. Probably the injection of those four animals could have been done in the area itself. If it could not have been done there, surely it was the responsibility of the district veterinarian in Saskatchewan under this government, who I understand is Dr. Christie. If no one was available from the Ottawa office surely it was up to the officials of the dominion department to see that those samples were sent to a proper laboratory, whether in Saskatchewan or in Hull, in order that the determination might be made, instead of leaving it for at least seventy-six days after the first announcement.

That neglect, Mr. Chairman, or whatever you wish to call it, could cost the farmers of this country hundreds of millions of dollars, not only through the loss of livestock slaughtered because of the disease but through the loss of markets which have been very lucrative to all breeders of livestock in Canada during the last few years, particularly those interested in purebred dairy animals.

That is the situation. The minister has apparently tried to place the responsibility on the provincial veterinarian, but I believe he admitted it was the job of his own department to look after this. As I said before, somebody must take the responsibility for that terrible error, and I hope the minister will follow through his suggestion that the whole matter be brought before the agriculture committee of this house.

The hon. member for Qu'Appelle said something about not being able to find any symptoms of the disease. That is one point I should like to deal with, and I wish the hon. member were in his seat at the moment. That is the particular folly of so much delay. Probably the clinical manifestations of the disease in the mouth last only four or five days. They heal up very quickly; there is no sign of the disease left, and the mortality rate is very low. So that is the thing I would criticize most in the whole affair. Now many of these animals have had the disease; they have passed through the feverish or febrile stage when those vesicles appear on the tongue, lips, nose and feet, and they appear to be quite healthy again. In such cases, unless you have the previous history, how are you going to tell whether or not those animals were ever affected? You cannot. Actually there is no way of telling, because there are such things as carriers of this disease, which give no manifestation of having had it. There is no way you can check an animal and tell definitely whether or not it is a carrier, except by good luck and probably a lot of experimentation or testing.

I cannot say too much about the seriousness of this disease. It is sometimes referred to as hoof-and-mouth disease or apthous fever. It affects all cloven-hoofed animals, including cattle, sheep and swine, as well as many wild animals such as buffalo, deer and moose. You will all realize then how practically impossible it would be to control if it were once allowed to spread to the wild animals so abundant in this northern country.

The disease is characterized by the formation of vesicles or blisters on the mucous membrane covering the tongue, lips, cheeks, palate or other tissues of the mouth, on the skin above and between the claws of the feet, and on the teats and udder of females. In hogs, lesions most often appear on the feet, but frequently appear on the nose above the snout. In sheep, goats and deer, the feet are the most common site of infection.

As a rule these vesicles or blisters will rupture in 24 hours. In cattle the mouth