

## Supply—Agriculture

Then after that I was surprised to hear over the radio an announcement of a meeting that had taken place at Ilderton, Ontario, on March 28. The announcement was as follows:

Official announcement of a government floor price for beef cattle can be expected within a week, Robert McCubbin, parliamentary assistant to agriculture minister Gardiner said today.

Mr. McCubbin told a meeting of Middlesex beef cattle producers they could expect a price something in relation to the Chicago market.

**The Deputy Chairman:** I presume the hon. member is making these remarks now only incidentally to reaching the item which is before the committee. If he does not come to it soon, I shall have to declare him out of order.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** All this is directly the outcome of the foot-and-mouth disease mentioned in this item. The announcement went on to state:

The Middlesex M.P. also predicted the U.S. embargo against Canadian cattle would be lifted September 1.

This is the outcome of foot-and-mouth disease, Mr. Chairman, and that is the purpose of this supplementary vote.

I also have a very interesting article in the last issue of the *Manitoba Co-operator* entitled "Ten provinces, eleven problems." It has to do with the manner in which this nation has been vulcanized by provincial embargoes following the outbreak of this foot-and-mouth disease. I expressed disappointment when my own province, along with other provinces, imposed these embargoes. Upon studying the matter since then, I rather sympathize with the provincial officials because they were not given the proper leadership by the federal Department of Agriculture. This view has been expressed by the officials in our own Manitoba department.

**The Deputy Chairman:** As I follow the remarks of the hon. member, they have nothing to do with compensation, and that is the subject matter of this item. It has nothing to do with the embargoes which have been imposed by the provinces.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** I am going to deal with the matter of compensation, but may I remind you, Mr. Chairman, and I know you realize it as well as any member in the house, that compensation for the herds destroyed is a very small portion of the total loss which the cattle producers of this nation are called upon to bear as a result of the outbreak of this disease. It has far-reaching repercussions.

However, the point about which I desired to ask the minister on Friday had to do with a point he covered in his statement. He said

he had received a report from the board at Regina as to the individual payments. Having said on the orders of the day that he would make a complete statement as soon as he had these results from the board, is the minister in a position to tell us the basis upon which compensation is paid for these herds? That is what this item is for. What was the top price paid per animal, and the average price paid to those who had their stock destroyed? Since the minister is having a conference with these provincial officials within the next two or three days, and since we will not be discussing agricultural estimates until after Easter, the minister should make a broad statement giving a lead to the cattle producers of this nation. This is a \$2 billion industry, and it could have an adverse effect upon the whole economy of this nation. We are fortunate in that we have never had an outbreak of the disease until this year. The Minister of Finance said that all these supplementary estimates cover matters that have been discussed on other occasions, but this is something new that has never been discussed in any previous session of parliament. We were only informed about the disease shortly before the opening of parliament, and the first three days of the session were devoted entirely to a discussion of this outbreak. It is a very important matter. Will the minister make a statement now and tell us what the basis of settlement has been, as well as any further information he might have as to price floors for beef which have been requested by the various provincial governments, including Manitoba. I think such a statement is due to the beef producers of this dominion, and I hope the minister will make it.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Mr. Chairman, I suppose I shall be out of order, too, if I refer to the first few remarks of the hon. member for Souris. I feel, however, that I should be permitted to make one or two comments. It has been suggested that my statement that my assistant was home sick was not correct.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** I did not say that.

**Mr. Gardiner:** There was no necessity for saying anything, then, if you did not mean that. The fact is that my assistant, like many other members of the house, had the 'flu this week. He went home with the 'flu. Of course, I do not follow him around to see whether or not he gets out of bed a little earlier than he expected, or whether he undertakes to go to a meeting even when he is sick. I have done that before, and I know the hon. member for Souris has.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** So have I.