

Foot-and-mouth disease

earlier? Surely somebody is at fault. I am not prepared to say who that party is but I think the livestock producers of Canada have a right to know whose responsibility it is. That person should be brought before the standing committee on agriculture and he should explain the action that was taken. That is why I strongly urge a complete inquiry into the reasons and responsibility for such an unwarranted delay in the quarantine proceedings.

Obviously on December 2 there must have been some suspicion on the part of the two veterinarians of the dominion Department of Agriculture who visited the farm to which reference has been made, because they did in fact quarantine it. As I understand the situation the quarantine was not too severe, but in their own minds they knew that a dangerous disease was involved and they decided to quarantine the farm until such time as it was found out what the disease was. Then we are told that from December 2 until January 15 nobody else bothered with the matter. On January 15 the veterinary director general visited the area. Did he not feel it was important enough for him to go there earlier? I do not know. The next question I had intended to ask was: What did he report? Apparently the report was vesicular stomatitis, and the minister said that Dr. Childs had something to do with ordering a quarantine. Is that the same quarantine that was ordered on December 2? Was that quarantine maintained or was it a new quarantine? Last Friday the minister said that quarantine proceeding were not taken until February 20.

Mr. Gardiner: For the district, covering the district fifty miles square.

Mr. Charlton: That is why I asked the question last Friday and the minister said that the quarantine was instituted a week ago last Wednesday, which would be February 20. The minister referred last Friday to the Saskatchewan authorities, and I want to deal with that because it is very important. Last Friday the minister did say that the provincial authority was minor in these cases. Some pretty harsh statements have been made with regard to provincial governments enforcing embargoes and so on, that they should not be allowed to do so, that they did not have the authority and all the rest of it.

Mr. Gardiner: I would like to correct my hon. friend. I did not intend to say anyone was negligent, and I think hon. members will agree that I did not say so. As far as possible I avoided putting any responsi-

[Mr. Charlton.]

bility on the provinces, other than to say that one gentleman in Saskatoon did go to the press and make a statement.

Mr. Coldwell: Was he not merely explaining what was the diagnosis?

Mr. Knight: Might I interrupt to follow up that point. An hour or so ago the minister referred to Dr. Fulton, wrongly, I think; it should have been Dr. Millar, who was reported to have made a public statement that the disease was not dangerous. I think I am quoting the minister correctly. Dr. Millar was talking about stomatitis, and I believe he was merely generalizing. I would ask the minister whether Dr. Millar gave that opinion on the diagnosis of someone else of the disease as stomatitis, or whether he himself had an opportunity to examine the cattle and make his own diagnosis, and then give that comment.

Mr. Gardiner: It would be impossible for me to know that. I only know that in Saskatchewan and every other province it has been the practice that all cases of serious disease are reported to the provincial department. I think it is the general practice that where there is any suspicion in connection with a disease they submit samples to wherever such investigations are carried out, and I understand that in Saskatchewan that place is Saskatoon. That was the case in my day, and I think it still is. I venture to suggest that what happened was the very thing that happens here every day. Everybody was talking about foot-and-mouth disease. The Canadian Press went to the university and asked the only authority they could find there, Dr. Millar, what were his views on the question, and he suggested that it was this other disease. I do not know whether that meant he had gone down personally and investigated. As will be found in *Hansard*, I said I did not know anything about that, that the only thing I had seen was an item in the press to the effect that it probably was not foot-and-mouth disease at all, in spite of what some of our own officials were saying at that time.

Mr. Charlton: I hope I did not leave the impression that these statements concerning the provinces were made by the minister himself. I did not intend to suggest that. I said many statements had been made; I did not say they had been made by the minister. Many statements were made with regard to provincial embargoes, and the minister made it very plain that this was not within the powers of the provinces, that the federal department could override that ruling if they wanted to, but they did not want to. Let me