

The mere fact that the price had been up in 1943 as compared with 1942 was justification for expecting that while the war continued, Britain would still need meat and the price would be maintained. In addition we had rationing of meat in Canada, and a promise like this had been given, so that certainly there was justification for anticipating that prices would at least be up to 1943 levels.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall the item carry?

Mr. BLACKMORE: No; it is not carried yet. We have only started on this thing.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

After Recess

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Mr. Chairman, before the committee took recess I was discussing with the minister the question of the marketing of beef in my own constituency. I believe that I used up about as much time as I should at this particular phase of the debate. However, I should like to finish reading the letter I commenced to read, and also read one more. I was reading a letter dated February 21 from Mr. L. W. Pearsall, secretary-manager of the meat board, to Mr. J. S. Smith of Smith and Kearn, Cardston, Alberta. The last paragraph reads:

We believe you will realize that it is quite impossible for us to provide against ocean shipping difficulties over which we have no control. These were primarily responsible for storage congestion and thus depressed the market for your particular class of cattle which was not in current demand on the domestic market.

The committee will be interested also in the letter which Smith and Kearn wrote in reply under date of February 28, and which reads:

We have your regrets contained in your letter of February 21 which are of no value to us. We were amply supplied with regrets before it arrived.

In place of these regrets we should appreciate some information. We have seen the price ceiling operative throughout the west. (Your letter appears to be a frank admission that there is not and never was any attempt to provide a floor price for the producer in spite of the fact information to that effect was widely circulated.) Your last paragraph indicates that demand alone dictated the price on these cattle, yet your control of exports which are prohibited to the United States and price ceilings are responsible for this congestion. We realize that you cannot control shipping difficulties, but if it is not your job to control prices, then we feel at liberty to ask what is your job?

These cows that went to the packers for seven and one-half cents one week and for which a week or two later they would have paid eight and one-half cents went to the

consumer at the same price as usual. We noted no fluctuation there. We note your regret that there is no provision to adjust the price to the producer. It appears quite clear to us who your present policy is benefiting. We should like to know why no provision was made to adjust the price to the producer if you expect to maintain price control. We should like to know why provision is not made now. We no doubt regret a great deal more than anyone else, other than producers, that it has not been done.

I think I have said all that I care to say at the present time.

However, in closing I should like to say that in my judgment the government was exceedingly remiss in its duty by failing to protect feeders and producers of beef against possible losses over which they had no control and which they could not possibly have foreseen. I think the government should be censured further for failing to centre responsibility. If certain adjustments had been made a great deal of loss would have been saved. If the responsibility for the purchase of beef had not been divided between the wartime prices and trade board and the Department of Agriculture much of this trouble would not have occurred.

I suggest to the minister that he urge upon the cabinet that his department be allowed to take over complete control of the whole matter of marketing of animals and also to exercise a measure of supervision over prices. Wherever the minister has had complete control over any matter pertaining to agriculture he has either found a solution or has put forth a substantial effort to do so. I believe that if the minister were entirely free to do what he deems to be best, he would do a good job. I should like to see his department have complete control over this matter, and I think I speak for my constituents when I say that.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: In the course of his remarks the minister did not reply to a number of questions which I placed before him when we were dealing with the general item. First, I asked what steps had been taken to provide for adequate marketing and storage of the increased live stock production which is occurring in certain areas at the present time. I asked also what the policy of the government was with regard to applications for new storage or packing plants. I asked also what the government was doing to reimburse farmers whose stock had not been accepted on the Winnipeg market and who had to ship east, with a resulting delay. I inquired about the quantities of meat which had been spoiled in the different years—I understand there has been spoilage—and what steps have been taken to reimburse those who have suffered losses.