

*Egg and Hog Grading*

But no bonus for the latter. I wonder why a grade of hogs is given a bonus when the other, hogs of the same weight, is not. One contends that it is for the finishing. I am well acquainted with the subject and I state that on 25, 40, 50 or 100 head, you will not find 10 animals which are finished the same way. Whether it be a steer, lamb or hog, I do not think it possible to add to the animal half an inch of fat or remove one quarter of an inch; that cannot be done. With this humbug known as select, if you have 100 head, there will not be 10 which will receive a bonus of \$1.00. The majority of salesmen on the Montreal market are dealers who travel through the rural sections, make their purchases from the farmers, load their trucks and ship to the Montreal market. At all events, I state that these dealers are at the mercy of trusts.

What the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Mullins) stated, just now, was the truth, speaking of his trip to Toronto; he had brought there 4,000 hogs and returned home with a profit of about \$40. I also know some who came to Montreal with as many head and made very little profit.

Another item:

Hogs ready for market 100 to 230 lbs. \$10.

Light hogs and to fatten 120 to 160 lbs. \$10, a cut of 25 to 50 for 100 lbs.

Heavy hogs, 240 to 270 lbs., \$10, cut of  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent per lb.

This means that when the dealer or farmer arrives on the Montreal market and a purchaser appears, he is told that the animals are graded and that lowers the price. If a dealer sells 100, 200 or 300 pounds of fresh roast pork at 15 cents per pound, he makes no mention whether the hogs weighed 120, 140 or 180 pounds, he sells it at the same price. The dealer pays the farmer according to the price he receives himself, and the price is set by the trusts.

The same may be said about eggs which are also graded. The farmers refuse to ship eggs to the Montreal market, because they inform us that when they do so, the report they receive, after grading, show that 95 per cent of their eggs are graded as third class.

I think, sir, that it would be desirable that a thorough investigation be held so as to expose these trusts which exploit the farmers. There are companies which make enormous profits at the farmers expense, just as there are coal companies which exploit the consumers in Quebec.

Take, for instance, lambs. A large number are brought to the Montreal market at the end of September or in October. The majority of these lambs are males, immediately a reduction of 1 to 2 cents per pound is made on

[Mr. Rhéaume.]

the price compared with the price paid for females. These lambs are slaughtered and placed in cold storage. The price paid is 4 cents per pound and with the overhead charges the cost amounts to 9 cents per pound, yet in winter these lambs are sold at 14 $\frac{1}{2}$  cents per pound. They are the same lambs, mostly males, which are sold at your dealer. There is no grading when they are resold, the grading is only when they are purchased.

It is seldom that a dealer or farmer goes to the Montreal market with any merchandise and that the latter is graded as first quality.

The same applies to calves purchased wholesale and for which the same price is paid. When slaughtered the trusts sell them at various prices according to whether they weigh 60 to 65 pounds or 80 to 90 pounds, etc. The grading is the cause of the spread of prices. I do not find fault, it is their business. Nevertheless, I think that the dealers who purchase these animals from the farmers should be dealt with fairly, because, as I stated just now, the dealers pay the farmers according to the prices they receive on the Montreal market. I am not acquainted with the Toronto market, however, according to what I have heard, the same conditions prevail there, for I think the Canada Packers have their headquarters in Toronto and branches throughout the country which exploit the farmers, just as in Quebec. I agree with the hon. member for Bromemissisquoi. If the government investigated the facts which I have submitted to them and which are my personal observation, I think it would prove very helpful to the farming class. The government contends that they are always willing to do all they possibly can for this deserving farming class, but once in office this good will is forgotten.

I state that the Canada Packers and other establishments of the kind in Montreal and Toronto should be dealt with like the coal companies of Montreal.

Mr. J. L. BROWN (Lisgar): I regret that I was not in the house when this discussion began. I only came in when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir) was, I presume, about halfway through his speech. I think in this matter I agree heartily with the Minister of Agriculture. It has been a matter of regret to me that during this parliament there have been attacks made on the grading system as applied to farm products, and the hon. member who sponsored this resolution seems to have been one of the leaders in making those attacks. When we come to deal with the dairy item in the estimates I propose to put on record some facts showing the effect the grading system has had on cream production