

of stocker and feeder cattle have been slightly lower this year than last year, but only by a matter of from 25 to 40 cents per hundred pounds. Such difference as has existed, however, constitutes an added inducement to farmers to buy unfinished cattle for further feeding.

That farmers have taken advantage of the opportunity is indicated by the fact that during the four weeks period under consideration the stocker and feeder cattle returning to the country numbered 22,833, as compared with 19,398 in the corresponding four weeks of 1944. This large movement of stocker and feeder cattle to the country indicates a greater than normal purchase of feeder cattle for finishing and later delivery to the markets. The recorded figures are, of course, in addition to the very large unrecorded volume of transactions carried on directly between farmers in the country.

As to the suggestion that the Government might buy cattle and have them killed, and the meat processed and sent to Europe, it is only necessary to point out that the killing and processing facilities available in the country are already being used almost to the limit of their capacity. The intervention of the Government as a buyer and seller could not increase the number of cattle slaughtered or the amount of meat delivered. It might, indeed, have the effect of temporarily slowing up the present high rate of activity by the interjection of a new and untried method of doing business at a time when marketings are extremely heavy.

If there is any "bottleneck" impeding the movement to Great Britain and Europe of the record quantities of beef now being produced in Canada, it is in the limited capacity of available freezing equipment rather than in the slaughter of cattle. Fresh beef, in order to be deliverable in good condition to Great Britain, must be hard-frozen before leaving Canada. Moreover, it must be frozen within a few days after killing, and must be kept frozen continuously until delivered to the trade in Britain. Beef when sold in the Canadian market is normally not frozen. Consequently, when cattle slaughter is heavy and beef is diverted from domestic to export channels, freezer capacity may become the limiting factor in the volume exported. Freezers in Canada are now being used to their practical limit, and there is every reason to expect that a continuance of freezing at the present rate will take care of the volume of beef that may become available for shipment to the United Kingdom.

One other method of exporting beef, namely, canning, is available to us, and this also is being used very largely at the present time. The full utilization of canning equipment reduces the demand for freezer space, and also makes possible the delivery of meat to destinations which cannot accept fresh frozen beef because of a lack of refrigeration facilities at the delivery point. All of the meat going from Canada to the liberated countries of western Europe and to UNRRA is being canned, because this is the only form in which meat can be generally distributed in those countries without serious spoilage.

Hon. JOHN T. HAIG: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to object to what my honourable friend is saying, but his remarks are out of order. This is not an answer to any question. The honourable senator from South Bruce, (Hon. Mr. Donnelly) in dealing with the Speech from the Throne, made a statement. The honourable leader opposite has already spoken on the Speech from the Throne, and there is no way we can answer what he is now saying. He is out of order. The statement he is making should be made in answer to a question from this side of the House. I am not objecting to the statement, but I suggest that, in order to make it legal, the honourable senator should move that the subject be referred to the Committee on Agriculture for investigation and report back to this House. Then honourable senators would have an opportunity to speak as they wished.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I think the honourable leader opposite and other honourable members will recall that the honourable senator for South Bruce took occasion to refer specifically to the suggestion which I have made, namely, that if my honourable friend was not satisfied as to the necessity for rationing, it would seem to be an excellent idea to refer the question to the appropriate committee, so that explanations could be given. You will recall, honourable senators, that the honourable gentleman from South Bruce approved of the suggestion, and spoke on it specifically because, as we were about to adjourn for two weeks, he felt there was not time enough to carry it out; but he thought the matter of sufficient importance to be brought before the House at once.

I took cognizance of his remarks and immediately had the matter referred to the appropriate source for a specific answer to the suggestion he had made, feeling that it was a matter of urgent importance. I am now taking the first opportunity I have had to answer. If I have trespassed too greatly, I would ask the indulgence of honourable senators. I very