

fact what all the rest of the farmers of Canada realize, that it will not work, and make recommendations in accordance with the experience of the present, I am sure that conditions will be very much better than they have been recently.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The reason why it will not work is that we destroyed what is called the free market. Is that not so?

Mr. GARDINER: I would not say that we destroyed it; I would say that Hitler destroyed it. There is no free market in war time.

Mr. BLACKMORE: When the government agency established a ceiling price they came rather close to destroying the free market. They established control over the whole market. As I said a few moments ago, control ought to mean control for everybody. It ought to control the prices of the materials that go into the product as it controls the price of the ultimate product. It ought to control everything pertaining to the commodity if it is to work properly.

Mr. GARDINER: If we undertook to do that we would say definitely to the men who have been feeding butcher cattle for red label beef, "you are not going to be allowed to do that." That is what we ought to say if we are to follow the suggestion made by the hon. member. It would be then the government's duty to tell everyone what he ought to do. The first thing we ought to tell him, in order to make this thing right, is that we do not want him to feed these cattle up from good butchers to red label. When he once brings them on the market they will be sold. We want them butchered and put on the market. On the other hand, if he wishes to go on with his commercial feeding there is one way of doing it. Take those cows. They can be fed for commercial purposes. They can be bought down below the prices that we have been talking about this afternoon. They can be fattened and sold by the same people who were previously building up steers that were already in shape for the market; they can take the unfed cattle. If this year conditions were to develop as my hon. friend's constituents believed a week or two ago they would, into a period in which we would have short grass and very little feed, then of course along toward the fall of the year steers could be bought which would have to be fed before coming on the market. The commercial feeder could feed these to the point where they would make good beef. Up to date the government has not endeavoured to carry regulation that far back, and I am

not proposing that we should do so. If we were to follow the suggestion of the hon. member for Lethbridge, it is there we would have to start.

Mr. BLACKMORE: It is certain that you cannot control part of a market and leave the rest of it uncontrolled, and have a good condition. That is obvious. That is where the difficulty lies in connection with this matter. The government is quick enough to control all the things that might give the farmer a profit, but it does not control those things which bring him a loss. The element in the whole situation that would make the policy of the government workable is the very element indicated in this press release; in other words, just as soon as there was a surplus of cattle that threatened to depress prices, a government agency would step into the picture and buy. That did not happen; it has not happened, and the fact that it has not happened constitutes a condemnation of the government's beef policy.

Mr. GARDINER: It is happening right now.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Is a government agency buying live cattle to-day?

Mr. GARDINER: Not live cattle, and our press release does not say that we are going to buy live cattle. It says that we are going to buy beef.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The point is that what was promised was not carried out. Men were eager to sell, were losing money every day, were trying frantically to find who would buy the cattle. When they approached a member of the meat board they were told that this board had no power to make policy, and when they approached a representative of the wartime prices and trade board they were told that it was the business of the Department of Agriculture to buy the beef. Therefore the misery was complete, and the disaster to hundreds of feeders was such that probably a good many of them will never recover from it.

Mr. GARDINER: We bought 107,000 head.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Alive or dead?

Mr. GARDINER: Dead, of course.

Mr. BLACKMORE: From the packers?

Mr. GARDINER: From the packers.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Does anyone conceive for a moment that the farmers would take this press release to mean that the government was going to buy from the packers?

Mr. GARDINER: Certainly; read it again.