

Mr. McGOWAN. I suppose it got into that condition on the way to Montreal?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Yes.

Mr. McGOWAN. Then, your cars were at fault.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. The cars were not the cars that we have dealt with on the railways. That beef was shipped in special cars by the people who shipped it.

Mr. CLANCY. It seems to be rather extraordinary that proper care should not have been taken at the outset to see that that meat was received in prime condition, because the hon. gentleman knows that these experiments are perfectly useless if we are to be told that the goods went all right so far as cold storage was concerned, but that the excuse in the end is, when they are found to be damaged, that they were not received in prime condition. It is rather discouraging and casts doubt and suspicion upon the value of cold storage as it is yet worked out. I think the hon. gentleman will agree with me that cold storage is in its experimental stage to a very considerable extent. It has not been put beyond all question so far, although, I may say there is a disposition, and a very strong one to, if possible, make cold storage a great success. The hon. gentleman has been forced, perhaps, to have it somewhat experimental all through. It seems to me that the greatest care should be taken that when perishable goods are sent as an experiment the first condition should be that they are properly received. I know nothing that will cast more discredit on the whole thing than saying that it was all right in cold storage, but that it came there in bad condition. It is the business of the department to guard against offering any such excuse as that to the public.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. In the first place I want to say to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Clancy) that these shipments were not experiments of the department, that they were entirely managed by private parties who sent them without any control or supervision on the part of the department. In the second place, I understand that this shipment of meat was made in a way in which I would not, myself, allow any shipment to be made. The meat was not hung in the compartments, but packed on its side like cordwood. I believe that under certain circumstances and conditions, if the meat is perfectly cool when it is put in and kept cool, that can be done, but in this particular instance in which this one shipment failed, the meat was known not to be perfectly cool when it was put in the cold storage chamber of the ship. That is the report of our officers and it is the acknowledged report of the shippers.

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The failure in carrying it across was due to that. The other shipments which were hung in the cold storage chambers, arrived in perfect condition.

Mr. McGOWAN. There seems to be something wrong with this system of storing meat in cold storage when it goes bad in the way it does. I know that there are thousands of cargoes shipped from Chicago almost every day, and it does seem to me that it is a very important matter, if we are going to establish a trade in Canadian meat shipped in cold storage, that we should be careful to see that we adopt a proper system. These shipments are going every day from Chicago to Liverpool and London, and they have been for years. The Armour and Swift companies are sending meat over constantly.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. That meat is always hung as far as I know, and the meat that was hung and not laid on its side went through in a perfectly satisfactory condition.

Mr. McGOWAN. Does your officer not exercise any supervision over the placing of goods in the cold storage chambers?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Not over these shipments.

Mr. McGOWAN. It is unfortunate that nothing has been done to perfect the system.

Mr. SPROULE. It must be a strong argument against the value of our cold storage system, that, whereas they are shipping meat from Australia, a distance of 7,000 miles, which arrives in perfect condition, we cannot ship it 2,000 miles and deliver it in good condition. The fact is that the department have exercised no control over it. If they had any control such as they ought to have, they should exercise it so as to prove that the system is not only feasible but useful, because, if, as has happened, a shipment is laid down in England in an imperfect condition others will not repeat the experiment. In this case they abandoned it after they had made a trial because it was a failure. It seems to me that there is something radically wrong with the cold storage system that is provided. The hon. minister spoke about three kinds of cold storage, mechanical cold storage and cold storage by refrigeration—I presume, by ice, would it not be?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. No, there is no cold storage with ice on steamers that I know of. There is none now.

Mr. SPROULE. You had that system at first.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I never had it.