

An hon. MEMBER: Where is Lethbridge?

Mr. BLACKMORE: I expected that the hon. member would not know his geography, judging from other things he has said. At this meeting there were 289 people, and they had altogether 26,000 head of cattle —

Mr. GARDINER: It turned out later that they had between three and four thousand.

Mr. BLACKMORE: — and 86,200 sheep.

Mr. GARDINER: It turned out later, on checking the records at the time that statement was made, that there were three or four thousand head of cattle ready for market.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The evidence I have here is not to that effect; I have been in close contact with the people there and I believe they know. This is the point. If a man named, let us say, James Jones, in an area outside Lethbridge has fifty fat cows ready to sell in the third week of February and he has no offer for those cows at remunerative prices, and is running out of feed, whom should he approach to have those cattle taken off his hands, in accordance with the promise implied in Donald Gordon's press release?

Mr. GARDINER: He should approach somebody who could turn them into beef and get them frozen in the places where they could be marketed in the sense covered by the statement of Donald Gordon.

Mr. BLACKMORE: In other words, the government had no agency for buying the stock.

Mr. GARDINER: Yes, there were agencies.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Well, what were the agencies?

Mr. GARDINER: My hon. friend seems to know what the agency was. He has been speaking of the different plants at which the product could be marketed. They are the agent of the meat board in connection with the marketing of hogs that go to Britain; that is, the plants that are able to process hogs and turn them into bacon and ham. The government has considerable authority over them; they have maintained, through all the period since the war began, the prices paid farmers for hogs in order that those prices might bear a proper relationship to the ceiling price of bacon and ham, and everyone who has examined into the matter has agreed that the relationship has been properly maintained. The same will be true in the marketing of beef in the British market. The facilities that are there for the processing of beef will be the agency which is purchasing cattle and

turning it into frozen beef that can be sent to Britain to supply them with food. The facilities that are there will be utilized as the agency to do it.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Suppose the marketing plants in the area refuse to take the cows, then what?

Mr. GARDINER: That is supposing something which does not happen.

Mr. BLACKMORE: But that occurred.

Mr. GARDINER: Oh, no.

Mr. BLACKMORE: That occurred.

Mr. GARDINER: There was a glut on the market for a few days, but within a short time a representative of the government reached Calgary, met the men and settled the whole problem to the satisfaction of those who were out there. My hon. friend is talking about a problem which existed for a few weeks in January and February and which he knows was settled to the satisfaction of those concerned.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The minister is entirely overlooking the fact that a man who has fifty or sixty head of stock can be ruined in a few weeks. That is the point the minister is overlooking, and he has not told us yet to whom this man, James Jones, could apply to market his cattle. All he has said is that the nearest packing plant or packing plants would take them. If the packing plants are not prepared to act then the man is simply out of luck.

Mr. GARDINER: What would the hon. member propose ought to be done?

Mr. BLACKMORE: Certainly there should be some realistic interpretation and application of this press release. Notice what it says:

The Wartime Food Corporation will be prepared to buy cattle.

That is not the fact, certainly.

Mr. GARDINER: My hon. friend has read the statement and I now say to him that that particular arrangement was changed.

Mr. BLACKMORE: When was it changed?

Mr. GARDINER: It was changed in the spring of 1943.

Mr. BLACKMORE: From that time thereafter—

Mr. GARDINER: From the time the meat board was set up it became responsible for purchasing meat.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Then, James Jones should apply to the meat board?