

*Agricultural Products Act*

A little further down on the same page the minister said this:

... for five years we are told that we can have a market in Britain for all the beef we desire to send them.

At that time, only two years ago, the minister was trying to sell this bill to the country on the argument of stability. He was going to give the farmers markets for their bacon, cheese, eggs, beef, apples and so forth for years ahead. He even mentioned apples specifically, as a matter of fact. We were going to have a stable market in Britain for these things; we were going to get higher prices in that market than the rest of the world was getting. That is what the minister said would be happening during this very period, but look at the present situation. The minister assured the farmers they had a stable market for their beef for at least five years. Why, Mr. Speaker, we did not have it for two years. Actually we did not have it for one year.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Surely my hon. friend does not mean that.

**Mr. Harkness:** Yes, I do.

**Mr. Gardiner:** You stood up in this house and declared—and probably you were right—that everyone in Alberta wanted the market changed from Great Britain to the United States; and we changed it in order to get you a better price, which unfortunately you did not get.

**Mr. Harkness:** I did not invite the minister to make a speech. If he wants to ask a question that is a different matter; if he does not I think he should remain in his seat as the rest of us do. I am just coming to the matter of the embargo, and later on he may ask any questions he likes. At that time, as I say, he assured the farmers that they would have a stable market for beef for five years, as well as a stable market for all these other products, but that market just disappeared. It evaporated; it is gone. We tried to tell the minister then that this would be the case. He has just reminded me that I and several other people urged him to take off the embargo on beef cattle going into the United States. Certainly we did, because we pointed out that the market he thought he had in Great Britain was not a stable or long-term market, that it was not economic for them to buy their cattle from us and they would not continue to do so. The minister pooh-poohed that and said, "Oh, no. There is no need to take off the embargo. We have the market in England, which is our best market at the present time." That is the way he continued to talk right up to the time when, by force of circumstances, because Britain would not

take any more beef, and because of other factors he was finally compelled to take off the embargo.

**Mr. Gardiner:** That is not correct; Britain did sign a contract to take beef.

**Mr. Harkness:** They were not in a position to take it, as the minister knows.

**Mr. Gardiner:** They could have, but you wanted to sell in the United States.

**Mr. Harkness:** Eventually, last year, the minister was forced to remove this embargo, after the beef producers of this country had lost millions of dollars under his direction in trying to maintain in the old country a stable market which was not there and never would be there.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Even after you got into the United States market you never got your 40 cents for beef.

**Mr. Harkness:** I wish the minister would remain in his seat until he gets permission to ask a question. I do not mind the odd interjection, but I do not like to have him make a speech in the middle of mine.

That is what happened to the stability the minister was promising us in 1947. Not only did the market for beef cattle totally disappear, but our markets for many other things, including apples, dried up as well. And our markets for the things we are still sending to Britain have been reduced considerably. That is the stability which was to be maintained by this legislation. There is no maintenance about it whatever. If that is the reason the bill was passed at that time, I would say it should be done away with now because it has not accomplished its purpose.

As has been stated, we on this side of the house, particularly myself and the member for Calgary West (Mr. Smith), urged the minister from the time we came into the house in 1945 to remove this embargo on beef cattle to the United States. Until last year, when he was forced to act, he stubbornly refused to do it. I think everyone will admit that the removal of that embargo was of great help to the whole economy of this country. It has put a great deal more money into the hands of the farmers and it is one of the important reasons why farm income this year is at an all-time high. This move was of considerable help in solving the exchange difficulties we have had with the United States. When he was in Calgary in January of this year, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) stated that it would account for \$100 million in United States currency this year. We would not have received this amount if the embargo had not been removed.