

steers which were ready for the block in the fall, put them in their feed lots and feed them through into the spring of the year, by that method producing extra fat or extra well-finished beef, which is called red label beef from one end of Canada to the other and sold at higher prices. By that system, under the conditions then existing, they were able to make money and at the same time serve the farmers to good effect by tending to keep up prices in the fall of the year.

Then we came to 1943, when we turned our pork back on to the market because we had enough of it to supply Britain with all she needed and to give our own people all they wanted to eat. Then beef started to pile up on our markets. In January and February of this year we said, "The offer is still there; we still want to buy the surplus," and, as the hon. member for Lethbridge has said, the buyers on the Calgary market were prepared to pay certain prices for cattle until the packers got the supplies needed for the market that was immediately available to them. Then some rancher out in the country would phone in and say, "I would like to sell my cattle." The packer would reply, "Well, I have all I can handle at the moment," but the rancher would say, "I want you to come up and see them." So the packer would go up and look at the cattle and say, "I do not want your cattle at any price at the moment; I have all I need." But the rancher would reply, "I have to sell them. This is the usual time for selling them, and I want to get rid of them." Then the packer would say, "Well, if you are bound to get rid of them, though I do not want them I will give you a certain price for them. In the meantime I will see that somebody looks after them until I am ready to kill them." That is practically what it amounts to. The same thing would occur if you went over to your neighbour and said, "I have some cattle here which I am bound to sell." The neighbour might reply, "Well, I have all my stalls filled now; I have all the cattle I can feed, and I really do not want any more." But if you were to say, "Well, I cannot keep them any longer; I want you to take them," your neighbour might reply, "All right, but if I must feed them for another month or so, which means I will have to buy more feed, I will have to pay you a lower price for them." In other words no policy can be established by this government or anyone else which will make it possible for a person to keep his stock for a higher market than is available, and then insist that they be taken on a certain day or during a certain week. People must be prepared to spread the marketing of their product over a sufficient period of time to make possible the

handling of it to advantage by whoever is buying it, whether a private individual or the government.

So that they ran into some difficulties for a few weeks, while we were on the second step of the stairs I mentioned. There were also difficulties when the last step was reached, but when we got to the top the difficulties disappeared. To-day the farmers who are selling cattle are getting the prices they said back in January and February they should be getting. But my hon. friend says the government should have taken them. If the government had taken them we would have had to hire some rancher to keep them until they were required for the market, or until they could be handled by the packing houses. So that we would have been in the same position that we were in as a result of what actually did happen. But another difficulty arose, about which a question has been asked. There were cows for sale. Well, anyone who has lived on a ranch in western Canada, or who has walked across a ranch, knows what happens. I have been on ranches in the west on which there were six and eight thousand head of cattle. The sires are running with the breeding stock, and the cows are bred. When the herds are taken in and sorted in the fall of the year some of these cows are prepared for market, and the usual practice has been to sell them before they begin to show that they have been bred. In January of 1944 these cows were ready for sale, but because of the circumstances I have described to the committee there was not a ready market for them. In the first instance the producers insisted on the government buying the cows. We replied that we were prepared to buy the beef just as soon as they could get the cows through the plants and the beef into position so we could have it frozen and sent to Britain. Finally, after some little delay, arrangements were made under which these cows were taken in, but not before some of the producers had taken a loss on them because of what developed, and not before some of the cows were in such a condition that it was not possible to market them in the spring of this year, so that they will be held over for another year.

The difficulties eventually were overcome, and most of the meat was marketed at a reasonable price. It is true that during this period the so-called floor price on cows would have been about 7½ cents a pound, and a few people were offered 6½ cents. I do not know how many sold at 6½ cents, but I do know that some producers wrote the department and said they had been offered this price, stating that this was one cent below the floor. Of course we replied that actually there was no floor price on cattle. The farmers have insisted