

Mr. SENN: Probably this would be the appropriate occasion to bring to the attention of the minister something akin to the matter I mentioned the other day. I refer to information being given out. A short time ago I placed this question on the order paper:

1. Has imported American bacon been used for military camps in Canada during the past three months?

2. If so, in what amount?

3. In what proportion to the total amount of bacon used at such military camps?

The answer to the first question was, yes. The answer to the second was more or less by way of an explanation or, perhaps, an apology. And then this followed:

Until late in May there was not sufficient Canadian pork to supply the export demand of pork and bacon to Great Britain. Therefore large quantities of United States bacon were allowed to enter the country to supplement our domestic requirements, and to relieve the situation in Great Britain.

Then it goes on to say it was felt that it would be unwise under these circumstances to discriminate against the United States product.

I have in my hand a copy of the Bacon Board Bulletin, No. 4, from which I should like to read one or two extracts. Table 3 on page 3 of the report shows the storage of export bacon in Canada at different periods, and it is indicated that on April 5 the total was something more than 32,000,000 pounds. Even if we shipped the total amount of bacon possible to Great Britain, and manufactured none whatever, we would still have had a considerable amount in storage. Therefore I cannot understand why the answer was given in the words I have indicated. I cannot think that United States bacon is being used in our military camps because we had not sufficient bacon in Canada to ship across the seas.

There is a further statement in this same bulletin showing that in the month of April there was a 60 per cent increase in the marketing of hogs in Canada, and I am told that at the present time and for some time past at least 10,000 hogs are being and have been marketed each week in excess of our domestic and foreign requirements. What is the explanation for the evident discrepancy in the two sets of information accorded me?

Mr. GARDINER: I am not just certain which department would supply the answer to which the hon. member referred.

Mr. SENN: It came from the Department of Munitions and Supply.

Mr. GARDINER: I presume that is the department from which it would come, because the purchases of supplies for the army are made through it. Usually those purchases are made on bids called for by the Department of National Defence.

In the light of the information available at the time I believe the answer is a correct one. I am not sure whether sales were still being made in April or May to supply the army, but if they were, they were being made on bids asked for by those responsible for army supplies.

The main reason for the answer in the form appearing in the return would be this: In December of last year we made an agreement with the British government under which we were to export to the British market something more than 5,600,000 pounds of bacon a week. At the time the agreement was signed we were exporting more than that amount a week to Great Britain. Great Britain continued to take more than the 5,600,000 pounds. For one or two weeks they took as much as 10,000,000 pounds, and I believe in one week the amount reached about 11,000,000 pounds. It was not known whether or not Great Britain would continue to take that quantity over a longer period of time. We were under the obligation, through the agreement, to deliver to Great Britain 5,600,000 pounds a week right through the summer. During the latter part of December, and in January, February and March we stored bacon in Canada to the extent of about 33,000,000 pounds, with the intention of having that bacon available to supply the British market in the months of June, July and August. The deliveries of hogs by farmers this spring have been much higher than was anticipated. Those deliveries have made it possible up to date to supply the 5,600,000 pounds per week without taking out of storage all the sides which were put in during the winter months. It is known now that we could have stored considerably less during that time, and had we done so it is just possible that more Canadian and less American pork and bacon might have been supplied to the army than was supplied to it during that time.

Mr. SENN: I do not deny the statements made by the minister, but they will hardly satisfy the hog producers that it was necessary to import American bacon, particularly to feed our soldiers.

Mr. GARDINER: Looking back on the picture I would say that that is absolutely correct. It is not a satisfactory explanation looking back, but from the other end it looked to be satisfactory.

Mr. SENN: I should like to continue with that, if I am not out of order, Mr. Chairman. I mentioned the amount in storage on April 5. Here is the next paragraph in the bacon board's report:

The board fully realize that these stocks were assuming dangerous proportions.