

bought the beef that he required for the business that he was doing and sold the beef that he bought at the price of that level; and then when he got up to the next step he paid the price that was possible under that particular price level, and so on until he got up to the present level, which is at the top, when we are only a quarter of a cent below the ceiling.

It was during the period when we were going up those steps that we met difficulties. We would go to the packing plants and say, "We want to buy your surplus." They would say, "There is no surplus here," and we were not able to get it. After a time we had to enter into special negotiations in order to get certain types of beef from the plants under that plan; and I must say that each delegation that came down from Alberta—and there were two of them—sat in my office by the hour, as a result of which the letter which was quoted here a few moments ago was written. I tried to convince them that they ought to recommend that that policy be changed. Up to date, so far as I know, they have not made any such recommendation. They have still, in so far as their advice to the prices board is concerned, given the advice that that floor, the old ceiling which was established in 1943 as the new floor, should be maintained in order that they could buy cattle feeder lots down at the bottom of the price in September and October and sell it up at the top of the price in the spring of the year.

That brings me to the answer to the question which was asked last night and referred to again to-day. It was: What does the minister think the farmer needs if he is to buy cattle in the fall and carry them over till the spring in order to be able to market those cattle successfully? I am going to answer that question by saying that the policy that is supported by the advisers who come down from Alberta, the policy that was supported year after year in the fall during the years in which we had great surpluses of beef in September and October, was based on twenty years' experience before this war, when every year the ranchers from Alberta came in in the fall with their herds off the grass and placed them on the market in Winnipeg or Moose Jaw, or shipped them down to the market in the United States. So far as this side of the line is concerned when that great quantity of beef came on this market it glutted the market and the price of cattle for every farmer in Canada was forced down. They realized that as well as anyone else, and therefore they established the policy themselves in Alberta with the intention of righting the position to that extent. That policy

[Mr. Gardiner.]

was based on the idea that somebody should go out in September and October in Winnipeg or Moose Jaw or Calgary; that somebody should go on those markets, buy good butcher cattle, take them out and feed them until spring in order that there would be fewer cattle on the market in the fall and more beef on the market in the spring. Again I submit that that policy was logical and probably very helpful in time of peace. But what is the condition prevailing to-day? I have outlined the position through 1942 and the greater part of 1943, when we were eating all the beef that came on the market in every part of the year and when there was no difficulty in the marketing of it from day to day. But in the fall of 1943 the advice given to farmers in the fall of 1942 began to produce results, as did our hog policy also. We were taking such a rush of hogs on the markets of this country that we were unable to process them and take them over to Britain. Therefore we removed the restriction on the consumption of hogs in Canada, and said: "Go ahead and eat all the pork you like. There is so much of it to-day that we are not able to get it processed and shipped to Britain." The people of Canada proceeded to eat all the pork they wanted, but they ate less beef than they did before. Therefore our beef in time began to pile up on us, and we had to come out with the policy which is now followed. From the point of view of the consumer and many of the producers that worked all right during the period when you could not sell beef as fast as it came on the market at certain periods, but it did not work when the packer had to buy more than he wanted for his own business before he was in a position to sell any to the government; and the varying floor under which we were working made it difficult if not impossible for the government to get that meat.

To finish my story with regard to the feeding of those cattle, how did the commercial feeders make money by feeding cattle before the war? They took butcher cattle, which were then ready for slaughter, and fed them for a period. Those butcher cattle make very good eating and are very good beef; as a matter of fact most people like them at that stage rather than at the fatter stage, because there is not so much loss in connection with them, but there are people in Canada who like red label beef. About the only place I ever saw red label beef sold before the war was in railway dining cars, and they charged me \$1.50 for a slice of the steak. It was sold also in some of the first-class hotels of this country, where they charged similar prices for it. The commercial feeders would take these good butcher