

Mr. Gardiner: I am not talking about gross; the gross is higher than that.

Mr. Charlton: Anyway, the minister has the power to sell or dispose of products at whatever price he himself thinks fit, the quantity and the price of the contract to be stated whenever and wherever he himself deems wise. How can this government, or the minister, expect to increase production, or even maintain it at its present level, under those conditions? I find in a speech made by the minister in London, England, on December 17 last that he said we were in a position to supply more than 300 million pounds of bacon to England in 1949. I wonder where the minister could hope to find that much bacon, if he was called upon to deliver it, and still leave any for domestic consumption. We were short on our bacon contract last year by eighteen and a half million pounds. Slaughterings in January this year were down 56 per cent from what they were in January, 1948.

Turning to cheese, I contend that we are gradually losing our market for cheese in Great Britain, a market which is so important to the dairy economy of this nation. Why is it so important? Because surplus milk production can be manufactured into cheese and sold to Great Britain. We are not now supplying, and have not for years, all the cheese Great Britain can consume. Our exports have fallen rapidly in the last few years. As a matter of fact, our production is now at its lowest level since 1900. Cheese has been the poor relative of the whole milk trade, and that has been caused by both manipulation of prices and subsidy payments by the government. Our dairy economy has been too closely tied to butter, which never has been, or will be, considered as an exportable product. On the other hand, our Canadian cheddar cheese is second to none. There is an export market in Great Britain for that cheese, as there has been for many years, if we can assure any degree of continuity of supply and will put it up in an attractive package.

I want to quote a resolution passed by the dairy farmers of Canada at Edmonton. Part of the resolution reads:

We endorse the British cheese contract as to quantity and recommend that the dominion government purchase cheese to fill this contract from producer boards on the basis of the price in the open market.

It is comparatively easy for one to sell a scarce commodity at less than the world price, but it is practically impossible to get over the world price in time of comparative plenty. Yet it is from this extreme to the

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other that the Minister of Agriculture seems to have plotted his course.

Is the Minister of Agriculture going to claim for himself and his party all the glory for increasing production up to 1944 and 1945 without accepting at least part of the responsibility for the decrease since that time? Surely he would not now try to blame the weather, feed shortages, or even the price of feed, as he did a year ago. This government, Mr. Speaker, through the Minister of Agriculture has played politics with food. They have gambled with the farmers' money and lost. The minister did not count on reduced production and increased demand holding prices a little longer than he expected.

The minister said something tonight concerning the bacon contract last year, but it does not jibe with what food minister Strachey said in England. Food minister John Strachey blames Canadians for the low bacon ration. I quote an article appearing in the *Ottawa Citizen* of December 11, 1948. The heading is:

U.K. arrival of Gardiner front-paged.

The dispatch is from London and reads:

London morning newspapers today front-paged the arrival in Britain of agriculture minister J. G. Gardiner of Canada. Gardiner said in an interview on his arrival Friday that he came to discuss the prices the British government will pay for Canadian wheat in the last year of the four year agreement. The *Daily Express* says in an editorial:

"Gardiner arrives when food minister John Strachey is blaming Canadians for the fact Britain's bacon ration is the lowest on record."

The Minister of Agriculture blames England for not wanting our bacon. I should like to quote now from an article appearing in the *Calgary Herald* of December 17. The heading is:

Gardiner says Canada filled all U.K. contracts. States disappointment over terms of 1949 pact.

This dispatch, which is also from London, reads:

J. G. Gardiner, Canada's agriculture minister, said today the dominion had never let the United Kingdom down on any food contract. "We only fell short of quantities agreed upon after it had been stated to us that the United Kingdom found it necessary to purchase elsewhere," Gardiner said in a speech before the Canadian chamber of commerce here. He said it is "difficult for us to understand why anyone should expect us to be other than disappointed with the 1949 contracts for bacon and cheese with no beef cattle."

I should now like to quote from an article in the *Vancouver Daily Province* of December 14, 1948, in which Dr. Edith Summerskill had this to say in the British House of Commons. The heading of the article is:

Canada guarantees bacon for U.K.

The article reads:

Doctor Edith Summerskill, parliamentary secretary to the ministry of food, said that Canada has given