

the farmer or producer a higher price in order to obtain the meat. I wonder if that was done, whether these companies passed on the higher price to the producer.

Mr. ILSLEY: What are the dates?

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: The date of this return is June 21.

Mr. ILSLEY: What are the dates of the purchases?

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: The return does not give that.

Mr. ILSLEY: It is a munitions and supply return. I would not know very much about it. The munitions and supply people are good buyers.

Mr. MacINNIS: Good payers.

Mr. ILSLEY: No; it is easy to say that, but I will support the buying authority of munitions and supply against any other organization in this country. They are hard buyers, and they have not paid any more than they have to for that meat. I am just saying that on their general record.

Mr. WRIGHT: Would the Department of Munitions and Supply not have the right to go in and acquire that meat from the packing companies without paying higher than the ceiling price if they required the meat for military purposes? It seems to me it should not be necessary for the Department of Munitions and Supply to go in on a barter basis if they require that meat for military purposes. But if the price ceiling is to be punctured, there is no limit to what the company may not insist on receiving. There should be some safeguard there.

Mr. ILSLEY: I do not think that could legally be done without the consent of the seller. That would be an expropriation, which would have to go to the exchequer court. I do not think any department of government has the power to expropriate property and compulsorily fix the price.

Mr. QUELCH: Not under the War Measures Act?

Mr. LOCKHART: If this meat question is to be disposed of in a few minutes, Mr. Chairman, I will yield the floor and wait, because I wish to speak on sugar.

Mr. SHAW: I have just one statement to make in connection with this matter of puncturing the price ceiling in purchasing meat. My understanding is that under the War Measures Act the government have the complete right to expropriate property.

Mr. ILSLEY: Right, but not to fix the price.

Mr. SHAW: The exchequer court of Canada will fix the price if the owner is not satisfied.

Mr. ILSLEY: That is right.

Mr. SHAW: Almost every week we find owners of property protesting against the price which the government has offered for property which it has expropriated. These cases go to the exchequer court. I cannot see why these meat packing plants should not be offered the prevailing price and go through the same channel if the price is not satisfactory to them, just as the city dweller has to do when a piece of property he owns is expropriated and the price offered him is not satisfactory. Like the other hon. gentlemen who have spoken, I feel that the minister has a pretty weak case, and I would urge him to strengthen it if he intends to satisfy a cross-section of this house. If the price to the packing plants is allowed to go up, the same thing should apply to commodities in general. I am not advocating that, but I cannot see what difference there is in principle between puncturing the price ceiling in one case and not in the other. This is the sort of thing that is causing dissatisfaction among our people.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I have wondered for some time why the price ceiling did not apply to purchases by munitions and supply—all purchases, not simply meat. My understanding is that munitions and supply in making purchases for the armed forces do not have a price ceiling set-up at all. I have argued many times that the producer is not getting a square deal, but here is the middleman being allowed to puncture the price ceiling, and this can easily develop into a racket. I do not see why the Department of Munitions and Supply should not be compelled, just like the ordinary consumer is, to buy under the price ceiling. That would eliminate a great deal of the dissatisfaction in the country to-day. Surely the minister can give us a better reason than he has done so far why the price ceiling should not apply to purchases by the Department of Munitions and Supply. Without repeating many of the arguments that have been made in the past, I would simply say that the producers in the agricultural industry were placed in a very unsatisfactory position when the price ceiling was set up on the declaration of war. Now to have returns brought down showing that munitions and supply bought these products, after they were processed, at higher than ceiling prices, certainly creates a very unhealthy feeling throughout this country. I