

*Dissatisfaction with Dairy Policy*

were to be lost before discussing the problem. There have also been other precedents—for instance the longshoremen's strike on the Montreal waterfront.

Therefore, a number of precedents prove that if we do not debate these urgent matters before the strikes or demonstrations take place, then it will be too late, for when you are in the midst of demonstrations by strikers or farmers, there is no time left for discussion.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I say that it is urgent to meet the situation, that we must not wait until we are faced with incalculable daily financial losses because, with the present government, we must debate these subjects, since the government is unable to face them with its own understanding and counsel.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that a number of farmers are now thinking about leaving their land, seems to me another reason for the urgency of this debate.

Furthermore, the fact that a certain number of people have to suffer daily from such dairy policy also proves the urgency of the debate.

Mr. Speaker, when we consider that the debate on national defence which will take place this afternoon is thoroughly futile and useless and that, on the other hand, the debate suggested in the motion presented by the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) might help to find a solution to a problem liable to prove very serious, the cogency of the motion will be recognized as well as the urgency of discussing it this afternoon.

• (3:10 p.m.)

**Hon. Théogène Ricard (Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, I have only a few short remarks to make on the suggestion of my hon. friend, the member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette).

It will probably be noted with surprise that, for once, I agree with my hon. friend from Villeneuve. Generally, my views are completely opposed to his, but I feel it is urgent to deal with this problem and to find a solution, since considerable discontent is being caused among the farmers and it is a constant source of complaints.

A few weeks ago at most, a large number of Quebec farmers came to Ottawa to ask the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) to take into consideration their urgent needs and the situation in which they find themselves.

Every day, farmers, particularly dairy producers, find themselves in an ever tightening squeeze. On the one hand, they are faced

[Mr. Grégoire.]

with a constantly increasing cost of production and, on the other, with an unprofitable sale price for their products.

Mr. Speaker, it has often been said in this house that we should try to solve the problems involving this nation. Well, this question of the dairy industry, to my mind, is one deserving of our immediate attention.

I will not detain the house any longer but I fully support, like my colleagues in this party, the demands made by the farmers. In fact, we have often called the minister's attention to the importance of the dairy industry and to the advisability of taking the necessary measures to ensure a reasonable price for the dairy producers. I support the motion submitted by my friend, the hon. member for Villeneuve, and I shall make every effort to ensure that farmers actually get what they are entitled to.

**Mr. Raymond Langlois (Mégantic):** Mr. Speaker, I do not have very much to say following the claims and the explanations relating to the dairy policy of the government. However, the member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) stressed the usefulness of the debate. I should say that it is not only useful, it is also necessary in the circumstances.

The member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) quoted the 100th comment of the fourth edition of Beauchesne's parliamentary rules and forms to indicate that it could be detrimental to the public interest. Mr. Speaker, I think we have only to refer to the situation prevalent a few weeks ago in the United States to refute his argument. Indeed, the situation of our neighbours to the south was identical to ours today, and it proved so disastrous for their dairy industry and for the American economy on the whole, that the United States Congress was forced to take action.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the point I emphasize is the urgency of the debate. We are faced at the present time with a threatening strike. We have had strikes in the past and we have had enough in one year, in one session. We always waited for the problem to fall on our heads and on our shoulders before making any move. For once, the farmers and their associations all across Canada have demonstrated explicitly that the government dairy policy is not beneficial nor acceptable. It has to be given a second sober thought here in the house otherwise they will take exceptional measures, they will go on strike and destroy their production if there is no improvement in the situation.