

Dairy Policy

committee had failed to put Canadian needs in line with Canadian production and only conflicts of interest within the management committee itself can be cited to explain that the committee completely distorted the dairy policy.

In 1976-77, of course, producers had to accept cuts in quotas. It is said that, theoretically, that cut was about 20 per cent but when one analyzes these cuts from the standpoint of the quotas of the producers themselves one realizes that those cuts were far from being even and one even wonders—and that is why we have the right to ask that those quotas be published—how it was that producers had their quotas cut by 20 per cent when some other producers—compared with 1975-76, 1976-77 and even going back to 1974-75—had their quotas increased 200 per cent, and even up to 300 per cent. Indeed, the government was always taken to task, and the motion introduced today would seek to have the government actually take its responsibilities as well as those who have to share those responsibilities with the government.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is about time producers know what their dairy policy is all about, that device which some dare refer to as the best possible policy, whereas in fact some producers have to suffer cuts and are in a very near future likely to have to accept more quota cuts while others seem to get quotas practically to suit their needs.

In spite of the positive recommendations we made in 1974-75 at the end of the dairy year, and in 1976-77 at the time of those drastic cuts, it has been deemed advisable not to implement the recommendations because the administration and distribution of quotas were not under federal jurisdiction but were the responsibility of federations and provincial bodies. The fact remains that we may find ourselves with new quota cuts in the very near future. We would very much like to why know some producers should face cuts whereas others are buying quotas everyday almost as they wish.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is precisely what we need to know to inform producers so that they will know exactly who is responsible. I for one, in the case of the province of Quebec, regret that the Agricultural Producers' Union did not take a firm stand. I discussed this with the chairman and he always says: If the UPA gets involved in the war between the two types of milk producers, it might disappear. Then to maintain the union, and we agree on that, the UPA does not want to say the truth to producers and prefers to get mixed up in a conflict of interest.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the leaders of the UPA try to make us believe that the federal government is always to blame for everything and we have letters to that effect: Quotas cutbacks are always the responsibility of the federal government when that responsibility, and the UPA people know it, belongs to their respective federation. There are also dairy federations in the industrial milk sector. It has been said that the dairy policy for 1977-78 was a good policy, that producers could accept it when a large number of them come to our offices and say: We do not have quotas anymore and we need them. As concerns whole milk, there has been a war between the two types of dairy producers since the beginning of this

[Mr. Tessier.]

year. They tried to make us believe that the federal government wanted to create this war and, as concerns the famous 25 cents, thank God, the problem has been solved as I think that the interdependency of the two types of milk has been recognized and even if they wanted to invoke established policies, they had to recognize that there was in fact an interdependency between those two types of milk and that if whole milk producers had taken advantage of a situation favourable to them since 1967, in 1977 they had to correct the actual injustice made to industrial milk producers.

Mr. Speaker, the war between the two types of dairy producers might start again and I think that we have the duty to throw light on the situation. This is why I ask the Agricultural Producers' Union to establish without any doubt that the administration and the distribution of quotas is their responsibility via existing organizations at the provincial level.

In addition, the APU and the dairy federations must reaffirm their exclusive responsibility, and take what means are necessary to make sure their members know that the administration and distribution of quotas is their exclusive responsibility. Moreover, the APU must call upon its permanent members and ask them to stop shirking their responsibilities by referring their problems to the federal government, and issue instructions to that effect; otherwise, Mr. Speaker, there will be no other choice but to ask that the list of all quotas, for all producers be published or, if it cannot be made public, then that access be given to it at least to the Standing Committee on Agriculture of the House.

Then the standing committee would be able to summon witnesses and ascertain whether or not there has in fact been manipulation of quotas because rumour has it that there is almost outright banditism in the field of quotas, their distribution and administration. We are responsible, as a government, because the government has invested millions of dollars in that sector; it has the right to know who is tampering with the data of its policy; to my mind, it behoves the House of Commons to make sure that the money granted the producers can and does in fact reach them, without any of the messing around that seems to exist now.

Mr. Pierre Bussières (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say that I strongly support the suggestion of the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Tessier) that the Canadian Dairy Commission publish the quotas of each individual dairy producer for the reasons that he explained. When we discuss the dairy policy, we find that there is one major difficulty which comes from the fact that this dairy policy, from its development to its administration, involves several groups or levels of responsibility and authority. Unfortunately, when this policy is ineffective, only one level of responsibility is held finally responsible, which is unfair since several managers or several administration or management levels deal with this dairy policy. It would therefore be normal that each level of responsibility recognize its own errors.

I believe that if the quotas of individual producers for the last five years for instance were published, we could see which producers kept to these quotas, which exceeded them and