

follows up through the Canadian clay belt. In that sense, the Sault Ste. Marie route is really not an option because it would be dependent upon passage through the United States, passage which we cannot guarantee.

These cumulative reasons I have given before. I have repeated them for the hon. gentleman this evening, but I have no expectation that we will not hear further from the hon. gentleman as he tries to think up new arguments for his proposal.

AGRICULTURE—DAIRYING—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON
LONG-TERM POLICY

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of my question earlier today was to determine if, in fact, the government does have a long-term dairy policy. I suppose this could be extended by asking whether the government intends at some future date to formulate such a policy. For our purposes this evening, however, I will accept at face value the assurances of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) that he does intend to have a long-term policy. One must be concerned, nevertheless, with the difference between the minister's intentions and cabinet's acceptance of those intentions, because we have had ample evidence in this parliament that, while the minister is rushing around giving great speeches, usually well received by the agricultural community, his cabinet colleagues are the last to listen to him, let alone concur in his recommendations.

Having said this, Mr. Speaker, let us trace the recent unhappy history of a long-term dairy policy for Canada. For years agricultural groups, associations and individual producers have suggested, recommended and demanded a five-year program. Today, in reply to my question, the minister indicated that a five-year plan was too short. Possibly he is suggesting a ten-year plan is twice as good as a five-year one. If such is the case, one can only assume that the minister claims an expertise and knowledge of the industry that is superior to the Federation of Agriculture, the dairy farmers of Canada, the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, the Food Prices Review Board, the federal task force on agriculture and heaven only knows who else.

But let us even ignore this. The minister, on March 22, 1974, in this House had this to say as reported at page 783 of *Hansard*:

I have told the farmers and have said publicly that we are working on a long-term dairy policy. Announcements will be made by April 1 according to the legislation.

Later he said:

—we have been working on it for three months as hard as we can. We have worked very closely with the dairy industry. I do not think another Minister of Agriculture has worked as closely as I have with the dairy industry.

Again, for our purposes tonight I will accept the minister's assurance at face value. I and many other members of the House waited, along with all Canadian dairy producers, with great expectations for the minister's statement of a long-term dairy policy when he rose to make his announcement last Friday. It is to be regretted, Mr. Speaker, that the minister did not make his statement on Monday, April 1, because then it could be excused as a poor April fool's joke in so far as a long-term dairy policy

Adjournment Debate

is concerned. Last Friday the minister made his long awaited announcement. It took 36 lines in the official report, of which but 14 were about long-term policy. And what is this policy? I quote from the minister's words of last Friday, at page 978:

The Canadian Dairy Commission has been authorized to enter immediately into discussions with producers and other groups—

The only action the Department of Agriculture will take is to authorize discussions. This is from a minister who claimed just over a week ago, "We have been working on it for three months as hard as we can". This is from a minister who says, "I do not think another minister of agriculture has worked as closely as I have with the dairy industry." The sole result of these so-called three months of work and the so-called close association with the industry is to authorize discussions. I ask the minister, Mr. Speaker, the following: What is his long-term policy to solve low financial returns? What is his long-term policy to solve lower production? What is his long-term policy regarding the 700,000-pound limit on subsidy eligibility quotas? What is his long-term policy regarding fluid milk producers who from time to time provide industrial milk?

Then I ask: What is his long-term policy to save the farm separated cream industry, except to import more and more creamery butter, an increase in imports of 362 per cent in 1973 over 1972—an increase of 362 per cent in one year alone. What is the minister's long-term policy on skilled farm labour for the producer? What is his long-term policy regarding the merger of market sharing and subsidy eligibility quotas? What is his long-term policy about a market price of products? Are subsidies permanent, or will the consumer be asked to pay the cost plus a reasonable return to the dairy producer? What is the minister's long-term policy regarding government service programs? What is his long-term policy to maintain a proper milk feed ratio?

There are other questions to be asked, Mr. Speaker, but I pose these to prompt some response, any response, from the minister. I appreciate, and sympathize with, the minister's difficulties in convincing cabinet that there even is a Canadian dairy industry, let alone convincing them that a long-term policy is essential. I hasten to assure the minister that we in this party will co-operate and assist in developing this policy, as we have in other agricultural problems which have faced Canadian farmers. I urge the minister not to accept a watered-down, do-nothing policy from his cabinet colleagues; and I am very concerned, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the minister's answer to my question today, that this is what is happening in cabinet.

Earlier today I asked the minister to make a definitive statement of his long-term policies for the dairy industry. In his reply he emphasized the need for consultation with the producers. I agree with this need. I regret that such consultation has not been going on on a regular basis as requested repeatedly over the years by the Federation of Agriculture, the dairy farmers of Canada and others. The minister then indicated that the government was ready to make a proposal to the industry and had instructed the Canadian Dairy Commission accordingly. What I fail to understand, Mr. Speaker, is what the commission is supposed to do now. Are they to consult with dairy producers, are they to negotiate with dairy producers, or are they to dictate terms to dairy producers? The minister then went