

Supply—Agriculture

As I said, the spread is 42 cents in the province of Quebec. The government should certainly look into the situation and carry out an investigation if necessary, to find out the reason for such a wide margin.

Mr. Chairman, the dairy industry is admittedly Quebec farmers' largest industry. Mr. Georges-Henri Vermette, president of the Quebec industrial dairymen's association, who is also the reeve of the county, lives in the riding of Lotbinière. Like the Vermette plant, the farmers of Lotbinière do business with the Coopérative de Granby, another institution that does us credit, since it processes as much as 33 per cent of all dairy products in Canada and produces approximately 40 million pounds of cheese, that is one third of Canada's total production. As you can see, in the province of Quebec the dairy industry is really the corner stone of agriculture.

Mr. Chairman, I am informed that Mr. Vermette, president of the Quebec industrial dairymen's association, submitted a request to the Department of Agriculture. I would like to take this opportunity to support his request as strongly as I can.

In view of the fact that the dairy industry accounts for half of the farm income in the province of Quebec, I feel that Mr. Vermette was justified in requesting the Department of Agriculture to increase the number of bilingual employees in its dairy products division. I am making this representation without any paltriness, pettiness or narrow-mindedness. The director of the dairy products division is not bilingual and I make it my duty to strongly request the minister to appoint a bilingual assistant director of the dairy products division. I submit this request in view of the fact that the dairy industry plays a major role in the province of Quebec and, consequently, for farmers of that province.

Mr. Chairman, I pointed out earlier that the gross annual income of a large number of farms in Lotbinière is under \$2,500. In fact, 60 per cent of the farms in the province of Quebec have a net annual income which is lower than \$2,500. Consequently, the restoration and reorientation of agriculture is imperative, and in order to permit the farmers of our province to have direct relations with the authorities of the Department of Agriculture we must intensify our drive for bilingualism so that the farmers of the province of Quebec may be understood and feel at home when they have to consult with the authorities of the Department of Agriculture.

I would not like to extend my remarks unduly. I just wanted to submit those few

problems which closely affect the people I am representing here.

Mr. Chairman, a rather critical situation prevails in the province of Quebec; it is, somehow, an ideological storm in which our people are struggling. Yesterday, I heard the hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher) ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) a question in which he expounded in thunderous words the somewhat dramatic situation of which we are well aware.

Indeed, several people in this country are trying to give to the policy of this country a trend which is not acceptable to us. The advocates of an ideology which would tear up Canada might, one day, resort to the same strategy as a man like Castro who also upheld agrarian reform?

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) is hardly dealing with agriculture.

Mr. Choquette: Mr. Chairman, I am dealing with agriculture when I say that it is vital to restore our farming industry and that there have been people like—

Mr. Habel: Castro nationalized all the farms.

Mr. Choquette: The people of the province of Quebec, and more particularly our rural population, are stable and do not want tremendous revolutions. But who knows, perhaps, some day a dictator not unlike Castro, by means of a farm policy similar to his, might advocate an agrarian reform due to the fact that our farming industry is, at present, in a sorry state. It might happen, Mr. Chairman. A dictator, a rabble-rouser could raise prejudices and tell the farmers who are poverty stricken: We are going to bring you land reform measures.

That is what we want to avoid. But, if agriculture is continually losing ground in Quebec, if our farmers are constantly complaining that their revenues are insufficient, we must anticipate that at that time, rabble-rousers like the ones across the floor of this house, will stir up people's passions and will attempt to tear the country apart when we are trying to unite it.

Mr. Ricard: We will talk to Mr. Lesage about it.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Chairman, it gives me pleasure to rise immediately after the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette). He was beginning to flare up, but he always came back to the same old rabble-rousing