

Announcement of Dairy Policy

Only the fullest co-operation will ensure rapid and accurate mailing of producers' payments.

The policy on which we are embarking is designed to bring economic stability to the dairy industry and to ensure adequate domestic sources of dairy products for Canadian consumers. Should the supply situation become such that importation of butter were required, any such imports would be brought in through the medium of a government agency in order to avoid disruption of the dairy support program.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, may I thank hon. members of this house, both those from this side who have been pushing me and those from the other side who have been pulling me. I sincerely hope we have achieved a new day in dairy policy which will bring a better way of life to dairy producers and a more secure supply to avoid any dangers to the consumers of dairy products in this country.

Mr. Clément Vincent (Nicolef-Yamaska): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great pleasure to the announcement of the new dairy program by the Minister of Agriculture which will commence next week. Since the minister made the announcement in both languages perhaps I would be better advised to answer in both languages.

The first point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that parliament, the country and everyone will recognize that an effective opposition have succeeded in bringing about a policy they have been advocating for the last 12 months.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ricard: We convinced them.

[Translation]

Mr. Vincent: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, if you will recall, we, on this side of the house, prepared last year a program asking the government to grant a minimum price of \$4 per hundredweight for manufacturing milk. Under that program, we suggested to the Canadian people that a minimum price of \$4 per hundredweight be set. At that time, if you will recall, we heard our hon. friends opposite say that it was nonsense, that it was impossible to carry out such a project.

We kept on asking for it and we had the support of the farming organizations in the country and of the whole population. We kept on asking for it until today and it must be

admitted now that thanks to its continued efforts, the opposition succeeded in getting what it had been asking for the last 12 months.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) spoke a little earlier about last year's dairy policy. You will no doubt recall that last year, as soon as the new policy was announced, we rose to complain about some measures included in that policy. Afterwards, and there again, the opposition was right. In fact, some Canadian dairy producers were forced to say recently in a telegram addressed to the Minister of Agriculture and to other cabinet members, as well as to some new experts in dairy farming, more exactly the hon. members for Hochelaga and Mount Royal (Messrs. Pelletier and Trudeau), that last year's policy was insufficient, that it had not reached the prices set by the government, that is \$3.50 per hundredweight.

In this year's new program an average price of \$4 per hundredweight is mentioned. Mr. Speaker, allow me to tell you right away that the farmer does not want an average price but a minimum price. It is humanly impossible to break down all the figures given by the minister but one sure thing is that over the week-end, we will take a close look at that new policy. If it really grants a minimum price of \$4 per hundredweight to the dairy producers, we will be the first to congratulate the present Minister of Agriculture. On the other hand, if that new policy does not guarantee a minimum price, in short guarantees only an average price, that will not satisfy the dairy producers of Canada.

The minister also pointed out the shortage of dairy products. As a matter of fact, we know that this year the national dairy production went down by 500 million pounds. We also know that there is a shortage of butter in Canada at this time. In fact, only this morning I received a telephone call from a store owner who has been asking the Department of Agriculture for butter since last week. He was asked to wait for two days. He phoned again and was asked again to wait two more days. That proves that there is a shortage of butter now in the warehouses administered by the agricultural stabilization board.

There is a shortage of cheese in Canada. It will be necessary to find new export markets and that is something we will ask the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters) to do so as to help the Canadian dairy