

*Business of Supply*

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Béchard):** The minister may answer only if he has the unanimous consent of the committee. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**An hon. Member:** No.

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Béchard):** There is not unanimous consent.

**An hon. Member:** Jack Murta said no.

[Translation]

**Mr. Allard:** Mr. Chairman, I simply wish to say a few words about the dairy industry in Canada. Needless to say that according to the latest statistics, this sector has badly deteriorated ever since the beginning of the year. During the present dairy year, the surpluses of industrial milk will reach almost 1.5 billion pounds, and in order to reduce production, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) could not find anything better than to apply quotas, to resort to a quota system which penalizes those who will overproduce.

The minister merely wants production to equal demand. In other words, he wants to match supply and demand. But I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if he really wondered whether the real demand was adequately met.

I am thinking for instance of those children throughout the country who do not get enough milk, butter and cheese. I wonder whether the minister thought of the people in Montreal and other cities who live in slums, of the children who do not drink enough milk every day.

Not too long ago, I moved a motion under Standing Order 43, urging the government to distribute free milk in all schools and, as usual, members of his party rejected it. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I wonder what the minister intends to do with the milk surpluses. The best he could think of was to apply quotas.

First, the Canadian Dairy Commission imposes quotas at random and does not bother to do an adequate marketing; in my opinion, we might for instance distribute our milk surpluses, swap products with other countries like the Arabs and exchange our milk products and our food surpluses either for oil, coffee or tea. There is no doubt that it could be possible during those exchanges to do some trading to satisfy the needs of countries stricken by hunger and here we could easily exchange this kind of products.

The minister said that we could not put a switch on a cow and turn it off whenever we want to. I would answer him that a cow is not a tap which we can open or close at will.

We are now imposing quotas and I sincerely believe, Mr. Chairman, that it is an insult to mother nature to do so, to pay western farmers to refrain from seeding and so on; I could also tell him that nature takes its revenge and it is almost a blasphemy today to live in a country which is immensely rich and to see that our system compels the minister to impose quotas.

● (2050)

All our surplus products could very well be stocked for future years which may be tougher, for years of scarcity when we call on nature to produce milk, to produce wheat and when nature fails to answer the call. I think we would be well advised to stock all our surplus products and give it to poor countries, or exchange them for something else, as I said earlier. One must keep in mind that crops are conditioned either by the weather, seasons which are shorter or colder, the harvesting season which may be affected by rains or early frosts, and sickness which alter the production in general.

In my opinion, the monthly quota is raving madness. Why not quotas for each milking, morning and night. More civil servants would be needed for the controls, which would permit the civil service to grow. That is sheer madness, you may say. Not worse than the monthly quota system. Farm production quotas of any kind are total nonsense in our twentieth century context of famine, poverty and disease. When the government paid wheat producers to reduce their wheat acreage, they simply financed scarcity, they financed a reduction of wealth.

When the government confronts milk producers with a system of quotas they do not reflect all the natural factors that can influence production such as those I listed earlier. They reflect neither the real needs of Canadians nor those of the peoples of the world. If they applied realistic policies allowing every Canadian to be adequately fed according to his needs, if they curtailed all unnecessary imports, namely cheese, eggs and all kinds of products, beef, etc., truly there would be underproduction, providing of course that all Canadian and world needs were met.

If we were to give a discount on all basic products to every Canadian family, a discount on Canadian products, especially to families most in need, certainly the overall consumption of Canadian farm products would increase. We would not then have to go the length of imposing those nonsensical quotas.

The government is using a bureaucrat kind, a paper kind, a high level official kind, a restrictive kind of laws. Too often they are antinatural they do not meet with current and future needs of the people. The government should have nothing else than an advisory role on farm product marketing boards. These boards should be under the direct control of farmers. I would like to point out that milk consumption in Quebec went down 33 per cent since 1972, I mean in 1955, average consumption was 133 quarts, while in 1974 it was 42 quarts, down 33 per cent.

Mr. Chairman, we in the Social Credit Party view milk, cheese and bread as vital food items to maintain childrens and old age people's health and prevent disease, this is also true of everyone else. Therefore, we urge the government once more to take immediate steps to restore the astronomical prices of milk, cheese and bread to the 1972 level.

On March 2, as I said, I urged in this House that the government take steps to have milk distributed in schools and universities, instead of coke and cream soda. As usual the answer was no. Mr. Chairman, per capita milk consumption is now 71 quarts in Quebec, as against 91 quarts in Ontario, the neighbouring province. There is no ques-