

*Dairy Policy*

that the farmers of this country will not be made April fools.

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Social Credit party for raising the present topic for discussion this day. They have shown leadership in raising it. The other parties have not seen fit to talk about agriculture on their opposition days. They would rather talk about something else, about other subjects which, to me, are less important.

I am amazed at what Conservative and Social Credit spokesmen have said. This does not apply to the NDP spokesman, who attended the last three committee meetings when dairy policy was discussed. I do not recall seeing the other spokesmen in attendance at committee meetings when dairy policy was discussed. I wish the hon. member who spoke on behalf of the Social Credit party had attended the committee when the dairy commission attended, as he could have asked his questions then.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** But he would not have received answers.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nystrom:** Super bull has spoken.

[Translation]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) on a point of order.

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, that is not in order. I know the minister is not used to sitting in the House, therefore he may not know the following rule. We are not supposed to judge the actions of hon. members in this House and we are even less entitled to make comments on them in Parliament. The minister should have the honesty to acknowledge that members sitting in a parliamentary committee do not make up the whole House.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It is no more permissible to question a minister's integrity than that of an hon. member.

● (1540)

[English]

**Mr. Whelan:** Mr. Speaker, I had no intention of reflecting on the integrity of anyone. I was just saying how informative it would have been had they been there.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Whelan:** In the announcement that I made last year, what I said about the dairy policy was very plain. I said this means that it is absolutely essential that the market share quota system be effective in balancing domestic supply with the requirements of domestic and export markets and that unmanageable and costly services cannot be tolerated.

When we suggested we wanted an increase in production, we got one. We wanted a 5 per cent increase in production across the whole nation. If I am guilty of anything it is of underestimating the ability of the dairy

[Mr. Peters.]

farmers of Canada to be as productive as they are. They are in essence what some of my colleagues in cabinet would love to have. We asked for a 5 per cent increase in production. It appears that before the end of the year we will have about a 15 per cent increase in production. How envious the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) would be of that position. The minister in charge of housing would also be envious of that position.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** How about the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde)?

**Mr. Whelan:** His main responsibility is for those who cannot be productive. His main programs are for the unfortunate people in our society who do not have the resources to be productive. That is something I want to touch on later, the social policies for which he is responsible and the tremendous job he has done for our society.

Some people in our society suggest that we should give away our surplus products. They say we should distribute them in a free and happy fashion, just as though we were Santa Claus. The other day someone asked me if I thought the dairy farmers should have an increase this year with the surpluses we have in this nation. I asked him if he knew of any person who, this year, is not going to be entitled, according to the Anti-Inflation Board, to some increase in pay. There are 800,000 unemployed people in Canada. There is a surplus of people for the available jobs. Do you know of any companies that will take less profits this year?

There are people who say we should give this product away. They are suggesting we take away the security, livelihood, and interest of these people in their investment. They suggest we take away an income for their managerial ability and their labour. There are even those in my party who suggest that, and others from other parties who make the same suggestion. They say that because the farmers have a surplus product we should distribute it holus bolus all over the place, just throwing it onto the market regardless of what it does to any other segment of our economy. They are not concerned about what effect that may have on some other commodity in that market. We must be very, very careful about this.

The hon. member who spoke on behalf of the New Democratic Party stated that the Dairy Commission only does what I direct it to do. I suggest that he read the act. The act does not give the minister or the governor in council permission to direct the commission except with respect to the importation or exportation of dairy products.

If the dairy commission followed the act, it would only have to report to me once a year and I would report to parliament. It is a Crown corporation. It is an independent corporation. That is the way I want it to be. I said in this House last year that we want the farmers to run this organization as much as possible. However, because of world conditions last year and unforeseeable conditions, such as perfect grazing and perfect forage that we had right across this nation last year except in one or two small areas in Prince Edward Island and central Canada, and we have never had better weather conditions, there was an over-production.

I was told by the dairy advisers that we could ask for a 5 per cent increase but we would be lucky to get a 2½ per