

*The Address—Mr. Lahaye*

our largest butter producer, should not be changed.

There is no reason why the farmer should see the price he is now getting for his milk go down for this would amount to a disaster.

I do not have the slightest doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the present government, which is constantly looking after, not only the western farmers, but also the eastern farmers, will be the one to receive the farmers' vote, because it is the one which will be asked to keep on helping the farmers who, like all other people, are entitled to a livelihood.

**Mr. Deschatelets:** When is the election?

**Mr. Lahaye:** It will probably come too soon for my hon. friends on the left side, the cold spot.

**Mr. Brassard (Lapointe):** That remains to be seen.

**Mr. Lahaye:** Mr. Speaker, I shall continue for a short time with the government's agricultural policy. I wish to establish that, as far as eggs, poultry and other agricultural products are concerned, the government has done a lot, first through the Agricultural Stabilization Act and, then, through minimum prices.

Whatever the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) may say, I am convinced that the Agricultural Stabilization Act has kept the price of eggs above the minimum price and that the government has not had to pay any subsidy to support it, at least not this year.

It is the Agricultural Stabilization Act that has created a balance between production and consumption.

There might be during a few months a small surplus of eggs and it is to be expected that this situation will right itself around the last six months of the year, which still leaves a minimum price for eggs, in case of need.

A similar provision exists for beef and pork.

You remember, Mr. Speaker, that before 1957, because of a policy that had nothing to give confidence to farmers, there was no way to stabilize prices. There were fluctuations, which were not decent, in the price of pork. In fact, the prices ranged from 17 to 40 cents a pound. Some farmers were almost driven to bankruptcy, because after buying piglets at the time the resale price was 40 cents a pound, they could hardly sell them after fattening, because the sale price had dropped sharply.

On the other hand, in view of the sudden rise in the price of pork, at certain times, doctors, lawyers, hotelkeepers bought pig farms of about 1,200 to 1,500 pigs and lost considerable amounts of money, although that kind of farming, normally, was rather profitable.

Fortunately, the Conservative government has stabilized prices by setting a minimum price of \$22.65. Last year, after a necessary adjustment period because there were hundreds of millions of pounds in warehouses, the price of pork went up a little to reach a high of approximately \$5 more than the maximum price of the previous year and this, without any subsidy from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I say that this legislation clearly establishes that the government is granting some protection to that agricultural class, in a country where there are too many producers for the number of consumers, and which will still have to be protected at least for a period of few years, the length of which we cannot determine as yet.

The voters will surely have confidence again in the government as they will be sure to continue to have a decent standard of living comparable with that of other classes.

With reference to the agricultural industry, on account of a policy which has been called for some reason vertical integration, we have seen a constant increase in chicken and turkey production, to such an extent that last year, prices went down to levels which were far from encouraging.

This government then decided to establish a tariff of 12 per cent on poultry meat imports from the United States. Unfortunately, because of the constant reduction in price, that 12 per cent represented at a given time only about 2½ cents.

Such protection was inadequate. Therefore, we saw last year that the federal government concerned over the agricultural class as usual, while keeping the tariff at 12 per cent, established a minimum of five cents a pound. This means, Mr. Speaker, for the information of the member for Maisonneuve-Rosemont who may not be aware of it, that the minimum applicable to imports of poultry, pork, chicken or turkey meat from the United States constitutes a protective tariff of 5 per cent. This now enables our farmers to continue their production.