

*Supply—External Affairs*

740. To reimburse the agricultural commodities stabilization account for dry skimmed milk donated to international relief agencies and organizations, \$951,634.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Can the minister tell us whether the government is in a position to make any announcement of its policy with regard to representations made by the federation of agriculture regarding a number of matters of concern to the milk producers? These concerns include this particular item. The milk producers, as the Minister of Agriculture knows, were in the city yesterday and I think the day before, urging various members of parliament of all groups to give consideration to a brief which had been presented on their behalf by the federation of agriculture some months ago. One of the arguments made by the milk producers was that an additional outlet for skimmed milk might be found in the assistance which we give to underdeveloped countries, particularly those countries covered by the Colombo plan. Is there any statement the minister could make on this item with regard to the representations made by the milk producers?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Mr. Chairman, this is not the proper item on which this matter should be raised. Here we are dealing simply with an item to reimburse the agricultural commodities stabilization account for dry skimmed milk donated to international relief agencies and organizations. The matter which the hon. member for Essex East proposes to raise is, of course, one which could properly be raised when the estimates of the Department of Agriculture for 1959-60 are before the committee of supply.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Surely the Minister of Finance is taking a very strict procedural position when he says that we have no right under this item to raise the question I have just put to him. The item reads:

To reimburse the agricultural commodities stabilization account for dry skimmed milk donated to international relief agencies and organizations.

That is the very point. The milk producers have suggested that one way to find additional outlets for their products would be by increasing our contributions to international relief agencies and organizations, such products being directed by the various agencies concerned to receiving countries which could profit by them. Surely the minister is not furthering the passage of this item by resorting to his present procedural attitude. When he was sitting on this side, he would have regarded such an attitude as a serious abridgment of his rights as a member of parliament.

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** This is not a serious abridgment of parliamentary rights. The hon. gentleman is well aware of the nature of this item. His subject is something which is entirely different from the matter now before the committee. He will have his opportunity to raise this question, and I am sure it will be discussed to the hearts' content of the hon. gentleman and any other member who is interested. But it is not a matter which concerns this item at all. This is a different year altogether.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** My hon. friend takes that position, but I must say I disagree with him strongly. The brief which the producers presented yesterday to members of parliament of all political parties included among other representations—

**Mr. Fisher:** See page 2.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I thank my parliamentary assistant for that information. In the first paragraph on page 2 of the brief it states:

Statistics show that skim milk powder is the only dairy product which can be definitely classified as surplus.

When they referred to surpluses they were, of course, bearing in mind the observations made earlier by the Minister of Agriculture, who referred to the surplus situation of agricultural production generally, a situation which in his judgment may cause a lowering of floor prices or a reluctance not to provide any floor price for other commodities.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. My hon. friend is discussing something that does not arise on this item at all. This item has nothing to do with the subject the hon. gentleman is raising. He is talking about surpluses. This item seeks authority to reimburse the agricultural commodities stabilization account for dry skimmed milk that has been donated hitherto to international relief agencies and organizations. This is not an item that arises in the estimates of the Department of Agriculture. This is one that arises in the estimates of the Department of External Affairs. It does not relate to next year or future policy but to the present year, 1958-59. Further, it relates to something that has been done. These are provisions in favour of international agencies, and parliamentary authorization is simply asked for reimbursement of the cost of those provisions to the agricultural commodities stabilization account. My hon. friend is going on to talk about something entirely different.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Mr. Chairman, I fail to understand how the Minister of Finance can take this position. We could take the