

Dissatisfaction with Dairy Policy

Mr. Pickersgill: I said there certainly was not a case two weeks later. It does seem to me, sir, that we should decide the question of urgency and not permit debate—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I remind hon. members that contributions at this stage should be to enlighten the Chair. It is getting dark.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): It seems to me that the argument advanced by the Minister of Transport indicates the seriousness of the matter that has been raised by the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette). The matter of urgency seems to stem from the decisions that have been taken by the farmers in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario after they have had an opportunity of examining the various aspects of the program that has been announced. So far as parliament was concerned, when the announcement was made the situation was that there had been consultations with the provinces and the various farm organizations. There was some reason for believing that the farmers were in agreement that the \$4.75 guaranteed by the federal government would eventually become \$5.10 with the addition of provincial subsidies.

The farmers have now had an opportunity of examining the program and are aware of three particular aspects in which it is lacking. The first is that the \$4.75 for industrial milk is the full price paid f.o.b. factory. This in turn raises two problems with which the farmers are concerned at the moment. One of them, of course, is the transportation policy, and I am sure all hon. members are aware of that. Transportation was not considered in the announcement, though I believe the farmers thought it had been.

In addition, meetings have been held with the provinces which indicate that the \$4.75 includes the provincial subsidies. For a considerable length of time farm organizations in general have considered \$5.10 the absolute minimum to ensure efficient farm operation. We are now importing butter; because of this program our butter supplies are becoming short. For these reasons it is my opinion, and I believe the opinion of the farmers, that rather than have a strike of farmers across Canada this parliament should consider the situation and attempt to find a remedy in order to avert a calamity.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that there are reasons why this motion is in order today. In spite of what

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

the Minister of Transport has said to the effect that the matter should have been raised several days ago, I say there was some confusion with regard to the practical application of the provisions announced by the Minister of Agriculture a few days ago. In other words, Mr. Speaker, it was not clearly understood by the members of this house or by the dairy farmers of Canada what would be the practical application of this announcement.

After a few days of consideration it has been found that the program announced is wanting in many respects so far as the dairy producers of Canada are concerned. I draw Your Honour's attention also to the fact that we have just ascertained that surplus fluid milk is going to be withdrawn from the subsidy as a result of the minister's announcement. This was not well understood when he made the announcement a few days ago. I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to citation 100, which is the one that deals with standing order 26, which says that the subject matter must involve the administrative responsibility of the government. I suggest to Your Honour that the motion by the hon. member for Villeneuve meets this requirement. The federal government pays a subsidy to the dairy industry. The Minister of Agriculture and government of the day are directly involved in these payments; therefore, as I say, that requirement of Beauchesne's citation 100 is met.

• (3:00 p.m.)

If Your Honour would now turn your attention to paragraph 2 of the same citation, it is there stated that the matter must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention. I suggest to Your Honour that the public interest is suffering at the present time, and that it will continue to suffer, unless this question is given immediate attention. As has been pointed out by a number of other hon. members, there is a great deal of unrest among dairy farmers with regard to this matter, and there have been indications that they are making plans to take some drastic action. In the meantime they are suffering from an economic depression that is well known to all hon. members who have studied the situation. So I suggest that this motion meets the conditions laid down in paragraph 2 of citation 100.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the matter that is probably paramount to your decision is dealt with in paragraph 3, namely the urgency of debate. As Your Honour well knows, urgency of debate applies when the ordinary opportunities