

*Oral Questions*

view of the general concern, justified or not, about the decrease in the dairy farmers' revenues that is expected in 1976, I would like to ask the Minister whether the president and the membership of the Union of Quebec industrial milk producers agree with the Minister's decision and the dairy policy, and if so, could the Minister recommend that the membership be kept informed as to their union leaders' stand.

[English]

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, we met with the provincial ministers of agriculture yesterday. One issue we discussed was the dairy policy for the coming dairy fiscal year, 1976-77. They know that new quotas will be set for the dairy year which begins in April of 1976 and they will have to produce according to those quotas. They know the programs that were suggested last year. There is an escalator clause and the CPI indexing formula in the contract which is still to be used. We can only use so much milk in Canada and only so much for industrial milk products for the world market. It does not make any economic sense to produce more than we can market. That is the problem we face. At the present time farmers are producing more than the market requires. They have increased productivity about 6 per cent over what it should be.

[Translation]

POSSIBLE MEETING WITH DAIRY REPRESENTATIVES TO  
EXPLAIN POLICY

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture a supplementary question.

In view of the answers he gave to the hon. member for Bellechasse, given the fact that Mr. Pigeon, former President of the Milk Producers Federation, has branded the present government's attitude towards the dairy industry as a blatant sabotage of this industry, and considering also the risk of the disappearance of the cheese industry in Canada, can the minister assure the House that he will meet with the officials and try to work out a solution with them in order to dispel these concerns and this obvious danger?

[English]

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I met with the dairy farmers concerning the skim milk powder problem. Through consultation we were able to work out a revolving fund. We have already had meetings with them concerning the importation of speciality cheeses. I was asked publicly by Mr. Pigeon what I said to the dairy farmers, and I challenged him to a public debate any time on the question of what we are doing about the dairy industry in Canada. We have done more than any other government in the history of this country.

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

**HEALTH**

ALLEGED CONTAMINATION OF TURKEYS BY SALMONELLA—  
ADEQUACY OF INSPECTION—IDENTIFICATION OF AREAS BY  
CONSUMERS' ASSOCIATION

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare is prompted by the statement made today by the Consumers' Association of Canada, to this effect: that the Consumers' Association of Canada has conducted microbiological tests on major brands of turkeys purchased in three major Canadian centres and a large number of samples were found to be contaminated with salmonella bacteria. In view of that statement issued by the Consumers' Association of Canada, is the minister in the position today to assure the House and country that there is adequate inspection capability in the department and that the confidence of Canadians will not be undermined by—may I say—this irresponsible kind of statement? It is irresponsible inasmuch as the association refused to identify the sources of contamination.

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for advising me of his question. On November 20, this year, I published a press release entitled "The Salmonella Problem" in which I indicated that foodborne salmonella infection is a serious matter, and outlined what steps are being taken by the government and what steps should be taken by consumers, to reduce the incidence of this infection, particularly in the consumption of poultry products. In addition—but for the postal strike—I had intended to distribute with family allowance cheques this month an insert entitled "Bird Watching", to advise consumers about this very situation.

Salmonella contamination from poultry has been with us for many years. The problem is of serious concern to the government and people of the country, but the matter must be handled responsibly. I hope this issue will not be treated sensationally, but handled responsibly. The resolution of this matter will take years and I repeat, the problem has been with us for many years. The issue must be handled responsibly by consumers and also by those concerned about this particular subject. I refer the hon. member to the press release I issued on November 20 on this subject.

**Mr. McGrath:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In the interests of responsibility, and as the Consumers' Association, by making that sweeping statement which fails to identify the three major centres, has put the whole country under the suspicion of contamination, if I may put it this way, may undermine the turkey industry when sales will be at their peak and undermine the confidence of Canadians who buy this traditional meat, will the minister press the Consumers' Association immediately to identify the three major centres referred to in their press release of today?

**Mr. Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Consumers' Association of Canada plans to hold a press conference on Monday, when they will probably identify the individual centres. I will be pleased to get in touch with them about this. But I would remind the hon. member that salmonella contamination is widespread and not limited to