

Interim Supply

Then he said:

That has been made absolutely clear, and there should have been no confusion at any time in connection with it.

The reason for that provision is, of course, that by and large the people who sell their milk in the fluid milk market—to the bottled trade—receive much higher prices than those who sell milk for manufacturing purposes. The idea of paying this 25 cents subsidy to those who sell milk for manufacturing purposes is in order to bring about to some extent an equality of price levels and to help to equalize the returns to the dairy farmer who sells to a cheese or butter factory.

That was the policy, apparently, of the Conservative party at that time. Perhaps it has changed; but if so, today is the first notice I have received of the fact that it has changed. What of 1961, when the hon. member for Qu'Appelle was minister of agriculture? What was the policy at that time?

I quote from *Hansard* of April 20, 1961, page 3826

Mr. Speaker, the government has authorized the agricultural stabilization board to continue the present level of price support for the dairy industry for the period May 1, 1961, to April 30, 1962.

They were going to hold their own from the previous year when they had had a cut-back of some 15 cents. I now quote from *Hansard* of March 10, 1961, page 2901. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle, then minister of agriculture, answered question No. 122 asked by Mr. Boulanger in these terms:

The subsidy of 25 cents per hundred pounds of milk used for manufacturing purposes is payable only to milk producers. The factory or factories receiving milk for manufacturing purposes, acting as agents of the agricultural stabilization board, pay the 25 cent subsidy and after proof of payment are reimbursed by the board. No subsidy has therefore been paid to the condensed milk processing firms referred to.

There again, we continue the subsidy at 25 cents. What was the picture in gross with respect to the subsidies that had been paid and the supports that have been given and are now given to the dairy farmers of this country? First of all I would point to the statistics as to prices received. Remarks have been made, and I think quite properly so, about the plight of the dairy farmer caught in the cost-price squeeze, as are all areas of the agricultural community, and the increasing costs the dairy farmer must bear for the goods which he buys in the marketplace. There is only one way in which we can enable him to meet those increasing costs and that is by increasing the price of the goods he sells in the marketplace.

I should like to quote the statistics in that regard. In 1961-62, with all the subsidies, the manufacturing milk dairy farmer received \$2.86; in 1962-63 the then government "improved" his position by decreasing his return from \$2.86 to \$2.62; in 1963-64 it was \$2.86; in 1964-65, \$3.16; in 1965-66, \$3.52; in 1966-67, \$4.00; and in 1967-68 with the 11 cents off—this is his net position—it is \$4.64.

• (12:10 a.m.)

In the four years that we have been in office the price that he is receiving has been increased by some 70 per cent. I suggest there is no other segment of the economy whose returns during this time have been increased by so great a percentage. I do not claim that this is the whole answer to the problem, but I do say that an increase of this kind very clearly shows the concern of this government for the plight of the dairy farmers. It shows that we have not stood still, as the previous administration did during their tenure of office. It shows that we have recognized the need and have moved responsibly and quickly, and at a very considerable cost to the taxpayers of this country, to try and meet the problem.

We will be here until dawn if we have to, but the story of the dairy farmers and what has been done for them will be laid before the house to the best of my ability, just as the criticisms, some of them responsible and others completely irresponsible, have been before the house. In so far as trying to get us out of here because it is late is concerned, I can assure hon. members that when it is a matter of telling the story as best as I see it and as truthfully as I see it in respect of the problem of the dairy farmers, I will stay here as long as anybody else who wants to stay.

Mr. Churchill: Will the minister answer a question?

Mr. Greene: I will answer questions when I have finished.

Mr. Churchill: When will the minister finish?

Mr. Greene: It might be quite some time.

Mr. Churchill: Is the minister not interested in interim supply for the government?

Mr. Greene: With respect to the actual payments made in toto to the dairy farmers during the time of the previous administration, which now is so critical of our program, as compared to the period when we were in