

Supply—Agriculture

had come from the government of the United Kingdom for assistance in flying supplies to overcome the Berlin blockade. I was not in position to give an answer at that moment, because I had not had an opportunity of conferring with the ministers of other departments and could speak only with respect to my own office. I am now in position to give an answer to the committee.

An inquiry has been received through our high commissioner in London as to what stocks of concentrated dehydrated foodstuffs might be available in Canada to assist in supplying food to Berlin in the present circumstances. A reply has been sent to the effect that there are considerable stocks of such food which would be available for that purpose.

I understand that on Monday last Mr. Bevin, in informal conversation with the high commissioners in London, touched upon the question of the adequacy of present air transport facilities for supplying the civilian population in Berlin. No request has, however, been received from the United Kingdom government either for food stocks or air transport.

Progress reported.

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S
SECRETARY

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the house that I have received the following letter:

Ottawa, June 25, 1948

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Thibaudeau Rinfret, Chief Justice of Canada, acting as deputy of His Excellency the Governor General, will proceed to the Senate chamber today, 30th June, at 9.30 p.m. for the purpose of proroguing the present session of parliament.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your obedient servant,
J. F. Delaute,

Assistant Secretary to the Governor General.

At seven o'clock the house took recess.

After Recess

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Golding in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Dairy products board—

693. Purchase of creamery butter to support the market at minimum prices subject to the approval of the governor in council, \$1,000,000.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Mr. HATFIELD: Mr. Chairman, I am in favour of paying a subsidy to help in the movement of agricultural products when the price is low, but I do not know when the price was low on butter. Will the minister explain this item?

Mr. BURTON: Before the minister replies I should like to refer to a question I asked him when his estimates were before the committee some time ago. He was not in a position then to give me the information I asked for. I now want to inform the minister that I personally inspected the Wolverine dam south of Humboldt; there is now water in the enclosure, and I have hopes that a prairie fire will not interfere with the structure in the next few years.

Mr. GARDINER: The item before us has to do with the fact that there is a floor under butter. The floor is 58 cents. If we are required to buy butter at 58 cents, money will be required; that is the reason for this appropriation.

Mr. HATFIELD: When has butter been down to the floor?

Mr. GARDINER: It has not been down yet, but we thought it might be down some time in the year.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): So you have both floors and ceilings to guard against every contingency.

Mr. HATFIELD: Subsidies should be removed when there is a surplus of agricultural products. Butter must be away up near the ceiling now, and I hope it will not go below the ceiling.

Mr. WHITE (Middlesex East): What I have to say, Mr. Chairman, has not altogether to do with the floor on butter, but many dairy farmers are today apprehensive of what may happen next winter. Some of them are afraid there may be another shortage of butter. In view of the fact that attempts were made last winter to have butter substitutes imported, and that we are exporting cheese, another dairy product, without too much hope of its ever being paid for, I am wondering whether it is good business to export cheese on credit and import a butter substitute made from vegetable oils from the United States, to be paid for in United States dollars. Now is the time to do something before we experience another shortage of butter next winter. Let us not wait until next December, when it will be too late. This is the season when butter is produced in quantity, and I hope the minister will assure the dairymen and the consumers that things will be taken care of.