

It has always been my belief, Mr. Speaker, and it still is, that in a democracy the government should support the efforts of producers whereas in a dictatorship the government gives them orders. When I examine both systems, I wonder where the present government stands. And that is what frightens me, Mr. Speaker. We claim to be a democracy, we pretend to be one. We claim to be a democracy and we are living under the worst dictatorial government we have ever known. All the decisions the government has made so far in the field of agriculture prove it.

The farmers cannot foresee the plans of the government, nor wait for it to announce its policy, without participating in the study of those programs. They must wait for what the minister will be willing to give them.

This bill provides for public hearings, but we know what the results are of those famous public hearings. Pretence is made of consulting the farmers, but when the time comes to apply the law the recommendations of the people who are really concerned, the producers and their associations, are totally disregarded.

We have had a striking example of this in the province of Quebec in the case of the manufactured milk production. Everyone expected concrete results, after numerous evening study periods and numerous meetings with the government and each and everyone of the parties. We ourselves had talks with the C.F.U. and farm organizations with a view to submitting, to the government, a well defined plan on the future dairy policy. All this was confined to oblivion, and the officials of the Department of Agriculture, as well as those of the Dairy Commission, completely ignored the recommendations and studies that had been made.

That is why one could read in *La Terre de Chez Nous*, on the editorial page, after the dairy policy was announced by the minister, and I quote:

Quebec manufactured milk producers bitterly disappointed.

It is quite a disappointment, for it means the disintegration of our dairy production. Indeed, a third of the farmers are now leaving their farms, precisely because of the "good" conditions the Minister of Agriculture has provided for them.

If only the same fairness had been shown, the same advantages had been given the milk producers, as the wheat producers out west. We are not asking for much, all we want is equal treatment with the wheat producers,

which would put an end to bitter criticisms by the farmers.

How are the wheat producers treated? There is too much wheat, so we are going to pay to prevent them from producing. It is nothing terrific, but at least we do not let them perish with their wheat, without a cent. They are paid so as not to produce.

If our farmers were paid, \$200 per dairy cow for instance, to be able to kill a percentage of their dairy cows, they would keep only the herd that would enable them to get their quotas. But no. More cruelty, more barbarism is shown here. They are smothered. The dairy farmer does not get a single cent for his surplus dairy cows. While the western farmer is being paid not to produce, this dairy farmer is penalized because his cows produce milk. What a ridiculous situation.

If he were at least given \$200 for each cow to be killed, that cow would no longer give milk, milk he does not know what to do with. There would be some justice. But no. Producers have to pay \$1.25 per hundredweight of above quota milk.

For two or three years, they were asked to produce more, by means of propaganda on television and over the radio, so much that I wondered what the Department of Agriculture was driving at. Now that they have accepted the conditions assigned to them, they are penalized.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Only one solution could be adopted today: if a dairy producer exceeds his quota by 50,000 or 100,000 pounds, he should be paid to slaughter some cattle in order to remain within the limits of his quota. He would then use the money available to turn to some other crop. We should not be afraid, for the farmers are not crazy. They will not waste that money. On the contrary, they will use it to grow other crops or to breed stock.

The government has ignored all the relevant studies that were conducted in the province of Quebec. In fact, an editorial writer has stated the following, and I quote:

These studies and this research made by the associations of producers, which are far from easy, were not made, without the federal authorities knowing about them. Far from it. Since November 1969, all the federal members from Quebec, the Standing Committee on Agriculture, and the cabinet ministers concerned have been kept informed through continuing consultations that everybody tried to keep objective and as close as possible to the problems of the producers. What did all that work result in? Nothing or almost nothing.

Such is the farmers' conclusion.