

Supply—Agriculture

Mr. Ricard: The minister will remember that at the time of the fire at St. Denis I kept in close contact with him. I was asked many questions by the village council of St. Denis and he and I exchanged quite a few letters and also held many conversations. I would now like to ask him whether he has received a resolution from the village of St. Denis asking help from the government for that municipality, due to the excessive expense this municipality had to undertake because of the fire?

I want to tell him that the people there are under the impression that it is the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture to give the necessary protection because this was material belonging to the government, and it is the government's responsibility to see that no damage is done to the municipality.

Mr. Hays: If the request has come into the department it has not been drawn to my attention yet. I am quite sure the storage people were paying real property tax and supporting the fire department, and the city probably felt it was their responsibility. I know that when I was mayor of the city of Calgary we would welcome the government storing things in our city and we would take a chance on looking after fires. That is what fire departments are for.

Mr. Ricard: But that is a big city compared to St. Denis.

Mr. Moore: I would like to ask the minister how much less money was paid out to producers of milk used in evaporated and condensed milk plants since the 25 cents a cwt. subsidy was removed?

Mr. Hays: I do not believe I have that exact figure. We did not pay the subsidy on the milk that went into the manufacture of condensed milk or for soft cheeses, but we did pay a premium, not 25 cents but 30 cents, on milk used for the production of cheddar cheese. Those engaged in the production of soft cheeses had to bid for this milk and the producer received the same amount as the cheddar producer. I gave those figures yesterday.

If the hon. member is speaking of soft cheeses, the amount the manufacturers had to pass on to the consumers would be about half a cent for each small can, and it was less than 1 cent a pound on soft milk cheese. Therefore in order to get milk the people supplying the producers of soft cheese and the condensers, had to bid against the cheddar milk buyers and they passed this on to the consumer. The d.b.s. figures I gave yesterday indicated that the price of milk to the producer has increased in every province.

Mr. Moore: Well, naturally the price of distributed milk could be up because that is controlled by no one but the local provincial boards, but with respect to the condensed factory which I have in mind, and with which I am closely connected, they have raised the price of milk on their own to compensate for the loss of the 25 cents, and they naturally had to raise the price of a carton of condensed milk cans to the consumer. However, the rise in price was not enough to compensate the actual producer for the 25 cents a cwt. he had formerly obtained, and I cannot see that this constitutes a rise in the price of milk.

Mr. Hays: Our d.b.s. figures do not indicate this. They indicate the producer is receiving more for his milk than he did a year ago, including the subsidy.

Mr. Moore: It may be only in the one area.

Mr. Hays: The d.b.s. figures cover all of the areas although there may be regional spots where possibly the price of milk was somewhat lower, but if producers were good operators, for the most part right across Canada they received more for their milk.

Mr. Ricard: I have here a copy of an invoice for a 3.3 test for Mr. Gilbert Bergeron of Ste Rosalie who sells his milk to Carnation, Waterloo. For a 3.3 test on June 15, 1962, his price per 100 pounds was \$2.89. For a 3.3 test on June 15, 1963, his average was \$2.80 per 100 pounds, in other words 9 cents less than when the Conservative government was in power. Of course, if the minister is going to compare a 3.3 test with a 3.5 or a 3.6 test he will certainly arrive at a greater amount for 1963, but I ask him not to compare a calf with a bull.

Mr. Langlois: I wish to speak on the question of insurance for the storage of butter and cheese, which was raised by the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot.

May I ask the minister whether he does not consider it good reasoning to insure this particular government property in the same way as all other government property is insured. It might not be often that we experience such a fire as the one to which I referred, but once is enough, and I should like to know whether the minister is considering taking out insurance coverage in respect to such premises. I do not see why the government should take the risk of sustaining such heavy losses.

Mr. Hays: The policy of the government as it has existed, as I understand, for years and years is that no government property is insured, for the reason that the risk is so widely spread and the amounts involved are so high. I know many cities which do not