

*Dairy Policy*

**An hon. Member:** They are not here.

**Mr. Ethier:** On the contrary, every year they speak out just before the dairy policy is announced and once again they play politics. In part (b) of the motion, Mr. Speaker, the Social Credit Party of Canada seems to forget how much assistance farmers and not only milk producers have received under federal programs since the appointment of the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) in 1972.

It is true that we are now facing an overproduction problem for 1975-76. However, as I said earlier, following many consultations with milk producers and the pressures brought to bear by all the rural members of our caucus, the cabinet will hear us and I hope that the Treasury Board whose minister is here today, will follow up on our recommendations.

I would be remiss if I did not mention in particular the work of the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Tessier) and the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Caron) who have devoted many hours of work to the preparation of a working paper which was submitted to the cabinet. In part (b) of his motion, the hon. member for Lotbinière blames the government for its failure to introduce adequate legislation which would protect producers and enable them to get a fair return for their work and investments, so that the production may be available to the consumers at a reasonable price.

This raises grave doubts about the validity of the motion since it is precisely the dairy policy for 1975-76. But like for every good thing or every good program, we shall go from difficulty to difficulty from 1975 to 1976 because of overproduction. The hon. member for Lotbinière started his speech by making fun of the issue and saying that there was no overproduction. Well, let him make fun and say that there is no overproduction. I see several of my friends in the gallery. When we discussed the problem, they understood that there was overproduction, just like we understood it ourselves. We want to solve this problem.

The hon. member also talks about a secret committee. He says that they had a secret committee, that they were not able to say what was their concern about agriculture so as to help rural and dairy producers in their constituencies. I am not a member of the committee on agriculture. I work for the whip with my friends. However, I have seen the attendance records and I did not see the name of my hon. friend, Mr. La Salle. Not a single one of my friends of the Social Credit Party of Canada came to discuss the dairy policy at the last four meetings. Some people claim to be sincere today and ask us to spend an additional hour in the House. Sir, I would simply—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. I should like to remind the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Ethier) before recognizing the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) that members should not refer to other members by name.

**Mr. Ethier:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry and withdraw what I said if I have offended—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. The hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) on a point of order.

[Mr. Ethier.]

**Mr. La Salle:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to say a few things to the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Ethier) who persists in remarking about the absenteeism of some members of a new committee. Mr. Speaker, I think this in an important matter and that it should be raised. I have not accused anyone of not attending a committee because I know that government members have many responsibilities. We all have our responsibilities but the House should know that we have met them in the last four months.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. The hon. member for Joliette knows very well the rules of the House; this is not a point of order but a point of debate.

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** The hon. member for Lotbinière, on a point of order.

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order and I should even say that I rise on a question of privilege, since the hon. member—and I refer here to our Standing Orders—mentions the fact that a member is being present or absent. I want to tell the House, on behalf of the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), whom the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Ethier) and our other friends sitting opposite know very well, is now ill and that the hon. member for Bellechasse is one of those who attended committee meetings most regularly. If the hon. member want to play such petty politics as to give such a low blow and direct his attacks to members who are ill, perhaps we should mention his own illness which, so far, has never referred to in this House—

• (1640)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, order. The hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Ethier).

**Mr. Ethier:** Mr. Speaker, if I offended one of my colleagues by naming him, it is because I got carried away. Perhaps I have too much at heart the matter before the House today. I want to single out the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) and I can say that he is really sincere. I often saw him at the sittings of the committee on agriculture and if he is ill today, I wish him a speedy recovery. I can say he is really devoted to agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether we should go witch-hunting and find out who is the villain, or whether we should not work together to find a solution to this problem. [English]

I think we could gain much from working together, approaching this problem in a co-operative manner, and everyone concerned accepting part of the blame, the Canadian Dairy Commission, the marketing boards, the Producers' Association, the producers themselves, the excellent weather we had last year, and perhaps we should also blame the cows for giving too much milk. I sense the feeling in our discussions with the producers that they all agree there was a surplus in production and they all agree to reduce production this year.

When we asked the producers to reduce their production, they agreed to the tune of some 10 per cent, 15 per cent, and for some of them, perhaps 20 per cent. That will mean a