

*Productivity and Trade*

... and of the Canadian Council of Chicken Producers. Rumours has it that Mr. Landry is the future president of the chicken marketing agency to be created by Ottawa.

If that is not a conflict of interest, Mr. Speaker, I wonder when there is one. And I also wonder what has become of the anti-combine legislation. Later in the month of March, we could see the procession at the doors of another purchaser and other interested producers. Here is what we could read on March 11, 1975:

Chicken producers "rebell[ing]". They lay siege at the doors of a U.S. poultry importer. They rise particularly against the Maxi Poultry Company which imports millions of pounds of poultry every year, while domestic producers can produce at only 70 per cent of their capacity ...

And further on, we read this:

The case of Maxi Poultry proves to what extent poultry producers in Quebec are at the mercy of the companies that make profits on their backs without, however, sharing those benefits with the consumers ...

While Quebec producers have to set themselves quotas, to avoid finding themselves stuck with surpluses they cannot sell, since January 1 Maxi Poultry imported 1,243,-435 pounds of poultry.

The president of that company said:

I import poultry to make up the shortage.

Can you imagine? "—to make up the shortage."! He has the gall to say further on, and I quote:

Quebec poultry producers are now experiencing difficulties because they are not interested in producing according to the demands of the marketplace, because they do not respect the quotas they set for themselves.

That, in any event, is the opinion expressed by Mr. Joe Freeman, ...

With the Freemans mixed up in this, Mr. Speaker, small wonder there are complications.

... general manager of Maxi Poultry at Ville des Laurentides, ...

Further on, he adds: As for me, I import only three million poultry a year. Another claims he imports two million. To my mind, Mr. Speaker, the poultry producers are right. I ask you: What are we to think of a monopoly at the production level, that also controls the meat and poultry market, the level of production and sale. That is what the small independent producers are up against at the present time. It is also the case of the one I spoke of a while ago. Are producers not being robbed glaringly? But that is what goes on. And that is what this government tolerates or encourages.

As time goes by fast, I shall take a few minutes to blame the government and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) in particular, with regard to dairy production. Last week, I welcomed some 60 dairy industrial milk producers of my riding of Roberval. Since then, several questions have been asked in the House to find out the minister's intentions concerning his dairy policy before April 1, 1976, so that the producers will know what to do about it. The answers have always been so evasive that dairy producers still wonder what is ahead of them. Indeed, on February 9, I asked the following question:

Since Quebec industrial milk producers and the management of industrial plants are seriously concerned about the government milk policy, which would result in lower income for producers, may I ask the minister, through his parliamentary secretary, whether he will recommend an adjustment to the milk policy to favour better returns for milk producers?

[Mr. Gauthier (Roberval).]

The answer was as follows:

... the minister, who is absent for the whole week and is to speak to several agricultural organizations in western Canada, has been examining this question for several weeks already and he will put to the House within a month a new dairy policy for 1976-77.

I did not get any answer other than this one. Then I wanted to know whether the minister could give us an idea of his policy before March 15. I have not yet received an answer.

On February 17, my colleague asked another question on this subject, and I quote:

Considering that for some months industrial milk producers have been suffering financial losses which in turn unbalance many producers' budgets, is the Minister of Agriculture willing to present the government's dairy policy around March 15, in order to give the producer's union enough time to indicate their views on such policy ...

The minister answered:

The program will be announced as soon as possible ... The dairy farmers of Canada know what they must do.

My colleague the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) asked a supplementary and I quote:

As the minister just said to the House that he met with representatives of the dairy farmers, and as representatives of industrial milk producers made representations to some members of Parliament and as it would be in the interest of Canada, of industrial milk producers and of the dairy industry in general that such policy be known as soon as possible, can the minister make a little effort to present this policy before the last day of March?

And here is the answer:

... the main difficulty for industrial milk producers of Canada stems from the world surplus and from surplus production in Canada. We have not cut back subsidies, as some people say. We are still paying the same amount of money for the proper amount ...

I insist on this because when you make a statement, you have to weigh your words.

... for the proper amount of dairy products, including industrial milk. As I said, we will announce the program earlier, if we can.

He probably thinks that farmers are stupid. He says to us: "We have not reduced the price". They have not reduced the price but they did reduce the allowable volume. That is the same thing as reducing the price. Then he maintains very seriously before the House that he did not reduce the price, but we know that he reduced the allowable volume. Same difference! This is why I think that when he says he will allow \$2.66 a hundredweight but on only 60 per cent of the quotas, while assistance to transport will be levied at 100 per cent, this is hypocrisy. If only farmers were told the truth: "Indeed, we made a reduction."

This is the motive of the discussions I had during my last meeting with a group of farmers who came to see me. They were saying: He must think we are stupid! However, I realize we must put the cards on the table and explain the situation.

During the meeting I was presented a brief containing a study of the dairy policy during 1975, including what they will get in 1976. We know what happened in 1975. In the chapter on the deterioration of the anticipated net income, it is said that, from April to November 1975, the producers did not receive the \$11.02 which had been announced. This indeed proves that, because of the increase in the export price, they did not receive the \$11.02 in 1975. Because of the