

Agricultural Products Board

in reply to the speech from the throne, produced figures which show that the farmers' produce is being sold at lower prices—except for one item, steak, which many people do not eat at the present time—than has been the case for many years. I am suggesting that the people who buy the farmers' produce, then process it and retail it are making profits to which they are not entitled. That again is not the fault of the primary producer who does all the work and gets the least credit for it, and who has less of the conveniences of life than any other occupational group in the country.

Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon): I should like to add a few remarks to this discussion, Mr. Speaker, mainly with reference to a resolution passed by the Brandon city council, and which was forwarded to me recently. I believe it is a proper resolution to introduce at this time; because it expresses the opinion of a large group of the constituents I represent in this house. The resolution states:

Whereas it has been generally recognized that milk is one of the most nourishing and beneficial foods for children, and it is therefore in the general interests of Canada that ample supplies be made available to all families at a price within their means; and

Whereas the cost of milk to the consumer in western Canada has doubled since the year 1946 when the federal government removed the subsidies which were in effect throughout the war years, with the result that milk consumption by families in the lower income brackets has sharply declined; and

Whereas there is every indication of a continued spiralling of retail milk prices, which can only have a further detrimental effect on the health of children of families financially unable to provide them with adequate milk supplies.

Now therefore the council of the city of Brandon respectfully urges the federal government to restore milk subsidies in such form and amount as may be necessary to maintain an adequate supply for Canadian consumption at reasonable prices.

I bring that to the attention of the house hoping it may be considered pertinent to the resolution that has been introduced this afternoon. While I am on my feet, I should like to enlarge upon the theme that has received some attention this afternoon, namely the plight of the dairy industry in Canada. I believe most members have had this topic brought forcibly to their attention recently as a result of the numerous cards that have been coming in from representatives of the dairy industry. I am sure we are all in agreement that the dairy industry is one of the most important in the Dominion of Canada. I have some statistics which were supplied by a past president of the National Dairy Council of Canada which amplify that point. The annual value of dairy products is about one and one-half times the output of electrical apparatus and supplies. The value of the

production of the dairy industry is twice as much as that of the automobile industry. Dairy products are worth about four times as much as the total production of gold and silver combined. Among all the industries of Canada, both agricultural and industrial, dairying ranks among the first three in gross value of produce. All this would lead us to the conclusion that dairying is indeed one of the major industries in Canada.

To bring another aspect of the problem to the attention of the house, let me state that many statistics could be cited as to the number of dairy farmers, the number and variety of dairy plants and the value of these plants; but if it is shown that 17 per cent of the people in Canada, either directly or indirectly, are dependent upon dairying for a livelihood, one can appreciate the importance of this industry to Canadians. It is particularly significant, I believe, that all countries with high standards of living are, without exception, great users of dairy products. More recently the countries that have acquired national autonomy, such as Israel and India, are busily engaged in buying large quantities of dairy products.

This afternoon we have heard of the healthful benefits of milk, ice cream and other products of the dairy industry. I am sure we can all recall our youthful days when the virtue of the consumption of adequate quantities of milk was indelibly impressed upon our minds. Even though as we grow older we sometimes forsake the consumption of that particular beverage for other forms of refreshment, I think we will all agree that the consumption of milk in proper quantities is important to the health of the nation. I recall that during the war it was compulsory for aircrew serving in operational theatres to have a daily supply of milk, not powdered milk but fresh milk. Apparently the authorities responsible for the welfare of air force personnel considered that it was important to have fresh milk in preference to powdered concentrates. Again I also admit that was not the only liquid refreshment consumed by members of the aircrew. In support of this view we can also cite the fact that the United States navy considers the consumption of ice cream of sufficient importance to instal manufacturing apparatus on board ships. Not only is it beneficial as a food, but they consider it important to the morale of the men serving on board ship.

Having said all this, the very obvious fact before the house this afternoon is that we are faced with a decreasing production of dairy products. It is well known that exports of