

The Address—Mr. Lahaye

has done, because we respect the intelligence of the voters.

Mr. Paul Lahaye (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I add to the congratulations and well deserved praise directed to you by the majority of hon. members who preceded me in this debate. I also extend my congratulations and best wishes to my excellent friend, the hon. member for Pontiac-Temiscamingue (Mr. Martineau) upon his appointment as chairman of the committee of this house. The same applies to the mover and the seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne, Mr. Bourdages and Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway).

Last Sunday evening, in my constituency of Champlain, in the town of Cap de la Madeleine, a convention of the Liberal party was held, and when I read the report published by *Le Nouvelliste*, the local Trois Rivieres newspaper, I was amazed to see a statement made by the main speaker, the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier). I regret that the hon. member is not now in his seat, but I am sure that he will have no difficulty in getting acquainted with my remarks.

As mentioned this morning by the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker), the hon. member for Laurier is supposed to have criticized, among other things, the subsidy of \$40 millions voted for western farmers after their poor harvest, while nothing was voted to help eastern farmers.

I can hardly imagine the hon. member making such a statement, and if it is accurate, I challenge him to go and repeat it on the prairies. I shall have the opportunity in a moment to show what the Conservative government has done for eastern farmers.

The hon. member for Laurier has also strongly criticized the policy of the Conservative government in the field of agriculture. He has accused the present government of having lowered farmers' income by abolishing support prices on foodstuffs, mainly eggs and butter.

Mr. Speaker, I consider that as a fallacious and unwise statement. Such a statement on the part of the so-called Liberal leader in the province of Quebec gives us an idea of the kind of arguments our opponents will use in the next election campaign.

It will be a bitter pill to swallow for our opponents to realize that the Quebec oracle from Cornwall is no statesman, but a petty politician. Either the member for Laurier is completely ignorant of agricultural policy—which he cannot afford to be in his capacity as the right hand man of the Leader of the Opposition, or he is horribly and wilfully distorting the truth.

If the hon. member for Laurier has any sense of justice and fairness, he will ask the paper I have quoted—if his statement has been misquoted—to put the facts straight. But, if his statement has been correctly reported, he will have to state on the page where the convention was reported that support prices are still in force for butter and eggs, the support price amounting, as everyone knows, to 64 cents a pound for butter, while the one on eggs not only has been maintained at 33 cents but increased to 34 cents last year for grade A eggs.

Mr. Speaker, as a lifetime farmer and the member for a rural riding, I believe I am entitled to make certain comments concerning the agricultural policies of the present government.

I will start by admitting that our dairy industry is going through hard times and, before making a survey of the situation which exists today and putting forward certain suggestions, I will briefly refer to the situation which prevailed before 1957, when the government which has since been put aside was in power.

Even though, by doing so, I might be accused of being prejudiced by my opponents, I would say that one of the greatest difficulties now encountered by the dairy industry results from the fact that the previous government, on the eve of the 1957 election, in a purely partisan gesture, with the purpose of window dressing, raised the price of skimmed milk powder to 17 cents a pound, which raise had never been requested by any agricultural organization.

Mr. Speaker, that is the origin of present conditions. That was the starting point of the difficult situation experienced by our dairy industry, and to prove it I should like to quote a farming publication which most hon. members—at least those from Quebec—will or should know. I am referring to *Terre de Chez Nous* of December 6, 1961. It contains an item signed by the editor, Mr. Paul-Henri Lavoie. This publication is in no way related