

Supply—Agriculture

that the government should carry its own insurance. Certainly this would seem a very sensible approach to me. Earlier in the year I did give exact figures as to the amount of butter destroyed in the fire, the amount that we were able to recover and so on.

Mr. Ricard: I think the minister is going a little too far when he says he has given all the figures. I think at the time he did not have all the figures, and this was the reason I was prompted to ask the question. I would appreciate having the figures at a later date.

Mr. Hays: I will look into the matter and give the hon. member all the figures.

Mr. McIlraith: I think I perhaps owe an explanation to the hon. member for Middlesex West. Last night a question was asked by the hon. member for Huron relating to this item, and in answering it I pointed out there were two different parts to the item, one having to do with the loss on actual purchases and sales and the other having to do with revaluation. I related the subsequent question to revaluation. It will be noticed that the question asked by the hon. member for Middlesex West followed a question asked by the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings while I was dealing with the subject of revaluation of inventory. His question appeared right after my remarks but it was actually asked while I was speaking, and I related the butter subsidy question to the question of revaluation. I am sorry if my answer in any way misled the hon. member, but that is how it came about.

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the minister if it would not be the proper thing to insure the butter in the warehouse at St. Denis Sur Richelieu. I know for a fact that the people there are quite concerned. They fear another tragedy which could be the cause of great loss. For instance, the butter oil, as it did the last time, could go down the drains and block all the drains of the municipality. The municipality are quite interested in this matter, and they would like to have an assurance from the minister that he intends to do all he can to make sure that what happened last fall will not again threaten this village. I should like very much to have the minister give me his assurance now that he will look into the matter and will do all he can so that the people of my riding, particularly those of the village of St. Denis Sur Richelieu, will be reassured.

Mr. Hays: I would be very pleased to send a directive to all people who store butter in Canada telling them to be sure not to have a fire.

[Mr. Hays.]

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask a question of the minister in French.

[Translation]

Was the storage plant which burned down at St. Denis Sur Richelieu owned by the government? I understand that there is no insurance in the case of government buildings. So, I should like to know whether this St. Denis storage plant was the government property?

[Text]

Mr. Hays: I could not answer that with certainty. My understanding is that it did not belong to the government.

[Translation]

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Chairman, if the storage plant, which was burned down did not belong to the government—and I understand that the government was paying so much a pound for butter stored—and if the facts prove to be true, I think that the person, or the company, which owns the storage plant has a measure of responsibility to the government whose products it stores.

If, for instance, a company takes my goods in storage, I shall assure myself before handing them over that the company is covered by insurance to protect those items stored on my behalf. It seems to me, therefore, that the government should also before paying out many thousand dollars in storage costs, see to it that the firm, or the person who owns the storage plant is insured, because it is not up to the government to take up insurance on products it wants to store.

That is the government's responsibility. The government should see to it that its products are duly insured when they are stored elsewhere than on government premises.

[Text]

Mr. Hays: I would be glad to look into the mathematics and pass them on to my hon. friend. I suppose there would be many different rates, with one rate for the storage of butter, but this is a situation concerning the storage of other things. I would be glad to give the hon. member information in some detail as to why the government does not pay insurance. It is probably cheaper not to pay it, and I can't tell him what it would cost to pay it.

Mr. Vincent: That was not exactly the question. The question is why the owner of this storage plant is not paying insurance on the stock he is putting in storage for the government, because he is paid so much a pound to store this stuff.

Mr. Hays: In this case it certainly was not carried at his risk. He would want a different rate if it were carried at his risk.