

you realize that something is wrong. There should be five quarts of milk. So you see that because of inflated prices, of inadequate policies, people do not eat enough cheese or butter—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order. The Minister of Agriculture on a point of order.

[English]

**Mr. Whelan:** Mr. Speaker, again I am sure the hon. member does not want to misinform the House and the people. Under our constitution when a product is sold or produced within the boundaries of a province it is totally under the jurisdiction of that province. Let us keep this on the right plane. We have no authority over the fluid milk about which the hon. member is talking. We have authority over industrial milk. Under our subsidization program for industrial milk we get four quarts of skim milk from one pound of powdered milk subsidized to the tune of 34 cents a pound, which amounts to a cost of 17.5 cents a quart.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order. This is not a point of order but a matter for debate.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matte:** Mr. Speaker, I think that the government is there to govern. If there is a problem of constitutional authority distribution in Canada, as we always say we should deal with this problem. If every province should be given more power, the government should say what kind of policy should be implemented to deal with that problem. We try to make a distinction for instance between the fact that natural milk is under provincial jurisdiction, particularly the province of Quebec in the case I am talking about, and that industrial milk is under the jurisdiction of Ottawa. The cow in the pasture does not see any difference. It does not know if it gives its milk to Ottawa or Quebec.

Mr. Speaker these realities might appear simplistic but we have an administration that gives a simplistic—not to say stupid—direction to milk production. This is why, to conclude, I wish to make people understand that we would like to deal with this problem once and for all. I have been here for eight years and every year the same problem arises. Why does it? As I said before it is because of the basic direction of this government. Then, this direction should be changed.

To change that direction, it is quite simple, it is quite clear, one of the most important points I think is first to guarantee to Canadian milk producers that they will have exclusive access to the Canadian market. Second, then build policies on common sense. That is to say we should go at it on the basis of the needs, that production must be made as to meet all needs. Since people do not consume enough it is normal that we should demand increased production, not that it be reduced. Let us take the necessary steps.

If it is simply a matter of money, it is normal, Mr. Speaker, that producers should be paid on the basis of the work they have to do. I would say that particularly in their case it is perhaps more of a profession than a trade since nobody suspects the basic part of the work being done. It would even be normal that they should have an income

### Dairy Policy

and profit even a little above that of the average worker. They do not even ask that. So if on the other hand prices must be adequate and appropriate to promote consumption of that product, Mr. Speaker, we have solutions to all that.

How many times did we say: If you no longer want to give grants to producers, give discounts to consumers. So if you want to promote a rational consumption for a basic product like milk or its by-products arrange those prices in that way by giving discounts to consumers according to their needs no consumption of milk and milk products can be promoted and the problem of milk producers of this country can be solved once and for all.

● (1630)

**Mr. Denis Ethier (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat of a problem to speak after the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte). Although I may show less eloquence, I can however assure the gentlemen in the gallery who are interested in agriculture that I will be more sincere.

I would first commend the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) for having chosen for this opposition day such an important matter, that is no doubt of concern to every member in this House. The fact is we are now at the end of the 1975-76 milk production year, the fact is we are awaiting with anxiety the news of the 1976-1977 milk policy. I am convinced that my hon. colleagues are sincere in their concerns for farm producers, and especially milk producers. I would like that we limited ourselves with constructive, positive suggestions, rather than taking this opportunity to draw the attention of farmers and milk producers, and indeed to play politics.

The hon. member for Lotbinière, in his motion, seems to have limited himself to hypothetical comments, because I am convinced he does not know the details of the 1976-77 milk policy any more than I do. He can no doubt think of certain assumptions, he can even criticize because such is the opposition's role. The opposition can even detect some *malaise* in the industry. I repeat this is the opposition's role to stress them. But above all, their role is to cooperate and share their vast farm knowledge, in order that we may together help an industry that has no other goal than survival. The industry want no more than their fair share, like the businessman or the tradesman. They simply want to be understood by the people. It is the opposition's role indeed to raise such problems, but I feel they are somewhat late in their offer for cooperation. This is why I say they are playing politics.

We, in the Liberal party, since we were made aware of the surpluses and know that the dairy industry would have problems, we got down to work and arranged many meetings with various groups representing the dairy industry in order to obtain suggestions for the formulation of the 1976-77 dairy policy—and I can say that those meetings were always most interesting and friendly.

Various groups explained their problems and made also suggestions, even gave some advice which I am sure has been conveyed to the minister and hopefully will be taken into account in our dairy policy for 1976-77. But, Mr. Speaker, the advice, suggestions and even positive criticisms of those great experts opposite have never been voiced.