

The Address—Mr. Dorion

readily endorse his very eloquent remarks about the exploit achieved by Colonel John Glenn, Jr., and, through him, by the mighty American nation. That scientific achievement is sure to be epoch-making and I hope it will be a milestone on the road to world peace.

Mr. Speaker, the debate on the speech from the throne affords all parties in the house an opportunity, first to assess the government's record, second, to learn of the government's policy and of the legislation it proposes to put before the house, and finally—and this is just as important as the others—to allow the opposition or the parties of the opposition not only to criticize the government, but to state what policy they would follow if they were in power.

While in the course of my remarks, I shall do all I can to avoid touching upon points already so ably covered by my colleagues of the government and hon. members opposite, I shall try not to lose sight of this threefold objective.

As everyone knows, the riding of Bellechasse, which I represent in the house, is an exclusively rural constituency which is dependant on three main sources of income: dairy products, hog breeding and wood lots.

The Agricultural Stabilization Act, passed by this government, has been of great benefit to the Bellechasse constituency, as it has to all of eastern Canada. Formerly, under the previous regime, unstable prices had been a source of worry and disappointment. At times prices were quite high, at other times they were too low and, naturally, this had a substantial bearing on the farmer's income.

Because of these excessive fluctuations farmers could not plan their crops on the basis of the annual yield they and their families could rely on. This act was meant to put a stop to those price fluctuations and to ensure that the annual income would be more stable and predictable.

As everybody knows, its purpose was to provide, in the case of nine staple products, a price support of not less than 80 per cent of the average for the ten previous years. Among the nine staples covered by this act, are beef cattle, hogs, eggs, cheese and butter.

The act also provides for an optional support price on many other products such as processed milk.

The act was applied through various methods: direct purchases, deficiency payments, fixed payments to the producer and fixed prices guaranteed in advance for a year.

In view of the agricultural situation in eastern Canada, and especially in the constituency of Bellechasse, I shall dwell on only a few of the products, those of greatest importance to the farmers in my area.

For instance, the price of butter, which had been 56 cents a pound under the previous regime, was fixed at 64 cents.

Producers of whole milk, delivered for butter and cheese production, get a 25 cent subsidy on each hundred pounds, which helps farmers considerably. Incidentally I may say that for the year 1959-60, \$10,951,000 have thus been paid out, including \$4,731,000 in the province of Quebec. Besides, in the year 1960-61, the sum paid by the government reached \$10,394,000, out of which \$4,545,000 were paid in the province of Quebec.

As regards the portion received by the province of Quebec and the eastern provinces, under that act and various others passed by this government, if I had the time, I could give figures which might well change the views that my hon. friend from Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) was expressing the other day when commenting on the estimate he personally approved, as we did, in favour of western farmers, following the drought which prevailed in that area.

The other day, I attended the annual meeting of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and I realized that there are rather acute problems, with which the government, indeed, intends to deal as soon as possible.

There is, for instance, the butter surplus, stocks of which, if I am not mistaken, amount to about 200 million pounds.

What is the cause of this overproduction? It must be noted, first of all, that in the province of Quebec, the embargo which had been placed on margarine has been lifted, with the result that consumption on the Quebec domestic market has fallen off, while the consumption of margarine has gone up. That decrease in domestic consumption extends all over Canada. And here, I would point out that it is time doctors agreed with one another in their views.