

The Address—Mr. Gauthier

Now, the Trappist monks, owners of the Mistassini dairy, write:

A new dairy year has started on April 1 and 2 since that date, you have been waiting for our prices.

I will not read the entire letter sent to all producers but I will give you the prices and I quote:

We shall then pay \$3.10 for second class milk and \$3.20 for first class milk.

Now, if you deduct 11 cents from this you will see what remains: \$1.11. It is easy to count. This is the report of the Mistassini dairy.

• (12:40 p.m.)

According to the latest statements of March 31, and April 15, milk, testing 3.6 per cent butterfat was paid \$3.07 plus \$1.11 as a total of \$4.18. Which is far removed from \$4.75. These are the statements.

Mr. Auguste Choquette (Lotbinière): That is a national average when they talk of \$4.00.

Mr. Gauthier: That is right but I am talking about my region. I think there is a problem. I do not mean that this extends to the whole country, but I want to consider the problem in my area. And I want to be sincere.

An even more serious problem which I have already mentioned, Mr. Speaker, is that resulting from the outbreaks of contagious diseases in my region during the past three years. Some breeders lost half their herds. It is absolutely essential that the farmers rebuild their herds. And, in fact, some of them have done so and their herds are back to normal today. They made sacrifices, they bought other livestock, and now they are faced with the threat of quotas. Imagine how disastrous that is for our region. The farmer who used to produce 200,000 pounds, and who only produced 100,000 pounds last year because of the outbreaks of disease, must produce 200,000 pounds today in order to make a living. But, because of the 100,000 pounds quota, instead of \$1.11, he will only get 55 cents per hundredweight. That is a very serious problem and one which I want to draw to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene), for this situation prevails not only in my parish, but in the four counties of the Saguenay-Lake St. John region.

That is why we can read in *La Terre de chez nous*:

Federation of the Catholic Farmers Union of Sherbrooke.

1,000 farmers are studying the new dairy policy.

[Mr. Gauthier.]

And they precisely raise the matter of quotas which are a disaster in our area. I do not know whether areas, having a normal production are affected, but in our area, it is really a disaster.

Moreover, we have to consider the 25 cents subsidy given formerly by the provincial government and which will no longer be given because it will be deducted from the federal subsidy; that is greatly prejudicial to the farmer and reduces the assistance he used to get.

That is why I say, Mr. Speaker, that we can prove that our farmers get this year, under the present conditions, less than last year, because of the conditions imposed, because of quotas, and because of the loss of the 25-cent subsidy and the 11-cent premium for transportation, on the whole previous amount. If only the 11-cent premium for transportation was limited to the quotas, but no, it is applicable to the total amount to the whole production.

This is extremely dangerous, Mr. Speaker, and is prejudicial to our farmers at present. We shall have the opportunity to meet the farmers shortly and they will readily tell us that the purpose of their march on Ottawa is not to congratulate the government, as some Liberal members suggested, yesterday, but rather to protest against that dairy policy. The following item appeared on May 3, 1967, in *La Terre de chez nous*:

Mass protest of Quebec and Ontario farmers—
March on Ottawa on May 24.

Their protest is fully justified. They are right because that policy does not suit them at all. There is an absolute need for a round table discussion so that the facts may be fully looked into, and I know that some members are responsible and anxious to look into them.

I admit that, in certain areas, things are not too bad. But in our area, conditions are unbearable. The farmer is unable to improve his lot and that is why we have so many farmers giving up their land.

Mr. Speaker, I see that the time allotted to me is running out, and I should like to connect with the amendment of the Conservative party a subamendment which will be accepted, I hope, by the Chair, so that we may at last take a serious vote on this agricultural question.

Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean (Mr. Simard):

That all the words after the words "Centennial year" be struck out and the following be added thereto: