

The Budget—Mr. Patterson

Mr. Patterson: It is quite evident where the lack of confidence is. They just could not see themselves supporting the lack of policies that had characterized this government, so they pulled out and said they were not going to waste their time.

I should like to call attention to some of the promises that were made by this government. I think of one in the 1974 election campaign, about transportation. I know that there is a reference to transportation in the budget speech, but if it does not mean any more than the promise that was made in the riding of Fraser Valley East some years ago, then nobody can look forward to getting any results from it. I just mention the fact that at that time the Prime Minister stated that there would be a rapid transit system put through the Fraser Valley to Vancouver. I know that this promise was made in order to try to prop up the Liberal candidate, but when I raised the issue in the House of Commons I was told that such a promise had not been made. Well, I will leave it to the people of Fraser Valley East to decide whether or not the Prime Minister made this promise. Certainly it was made in the Fraser Valley, it appeared in the papers, and yet we have not seen it fulfilled.

The agricultural community in Fraser Valley East and in other parts of B.C., as well as in some of the other western provinces, have given up hope that the government will fulfil its 1974 promise to adjust the freight rates so as to bring justice and fairness to the movement of goods between eastern and western Canada. I am glad the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) is here because this matter has been brought to his attention on a great many occasions. Those engaged in secondary industries and in the processing industries are facing insuperable problems because of the fact that the freight rates are loaded against them. The result is that they are suffering economically because no attempt has yet been made to take any remedial action in this regard. Conferences have been held, promises have been given and glowing statements have been made regarding what was going to be done in order to assist in the development of western Canada and the development of secondary industry, but we have not seen them yet.

● (1502)

I intended to call attention to another matter yesterday, but because of lack of time I did not raise it. Again this morning I was unable to do so. I should like to make reference to the dairy situation in the province of British Columbia. Representations were made by the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association a few days ago. They pointed out the need for some changes as far as dairy policy is concerned. They pointed out that the provincial market shares of the national quota of 100 million cwt are as follows: British Columbia, 3.1 per cent; Alberta, 6.7 per cent; Saskatchewan, 2.5 per cent; Manitoba, 3.9 per cent; Ontario, 31.4 per cent; Quebec, 48 per cent; the maritime provinces, 4.3 per cent.

As far as British Columbia was concerned, even though there might be some justification for it when the quotas were established in 1971, changes have taken place. The population of British Columbia has grown tremendously. The consumption of fluid milk has grown and is continuing to grow. British

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Columbia is self-sufficient, as far as fresh milk is concerned for the fluid trade, but it produces only 20 per cent of its industrial milk needs. The document went on to indicate that approximately nine million cwt of milk is produced in British Columbia. About six million cwt is sold on the fresh market, and the balance of three million cwt is the market share quota of British Columbia. This is the total allowable amount of industrial milk which can be produced in British Columbia, as established by the Canadian milk supply management committee several years ago.

Another statement referred to the fact that it is important that the market for semi-fluid products be allowed to grow and that milk production in the province of British Columbia be allowed to expand in a relative fashion. Also the document indicated that industrial milk plants at Abbotsford and Sardis should be increased to enable them to maintain viable plants with trained staff in order to meet the needs of the dairy industry in British Columbia.

I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) the following question: In view of the fact that fluid milk consumption in British Columbia is increasing, and in meeting this demand there will of necessity be an increase in the production of milk, will he consider the desirability of recommending the granting to that province of a higher percentage of the provincial market share quota, or through another mechanism, in order that the industry will be permitted to expand within its industrial production? I think this request is very valid. Because of the changing circumstances and situations, provision must be made for the expansion of that industry in British Columbia.

Another question I should like to ask is: As surplus milk must be of sufficient volume to allow for the maintenance of an adequate processing facility and trained staff, and as all such milk produced on the lower mainland of British Columbia and Vancouver Island is processed by the two Fraser Valley milk producing plants in Abbotsford and Sardis, will the minister call upon the Canadian Dairy Commission to call a meeting of the national supply management committee at the earliest possible moment to resolve this problem which is affecting seriously the British Columbia dairy industry?

The agricultural producers of British Columbia are working under enough handicaps, some of which I have pointed out. The time has come when greater attention must be given to some of these matters, rather than the matters which seemingly take up so much of the government's time.

As we are considering the other matters in this debate, and as we look at the various needs which have been brought to our attention, it is incumbent upon the government to make a serious attempt to remedy the situation which has developed and which is continuing in this nation. Some semblance of reality must be brought into the entire picture. The government has not acted in a manner which will produce the results we require or solve the problems facing us. Instead of spending so much time on other matters, the government should give attention to the basic problem of dealing with the fundamental issues before us. Budgets to help solve those problems should