

Dairy Policy

Canada, it could be foreseen that milk and cheese imports would increase in New Zealand. He said that in 1968, eight years ago. So this situation is the result of the very thrust of the government policies.

The same thing prevails in respect of cheese. Even if the minister were to stand in his place and say: There is no solution, we cannot even market our products—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. The hon. minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) rises on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am sure the hon. member would not want to misinform the House. The only time butter was imported into this country was when we did not have enough to supply our own market. We are not importing butter now.

[Translation]

Mr. Matte: The minister is giving weight to what I am saying.

Mr. Speaker, I said that the causes of the present situation ought to be analyzed. And in all fairness, we should also mention what should have been done by the government. What I have said, what I have proven, cannot be denied. Here is another example of what he has told us. That is all very good, but he says that powdered milk may be dangerous for people who are not used to it. However, if the government does not try to open stable markets in Guatemala, in South America, in Africa or in Asia, people over there will never get used to it. But the minister knows quite well that those people lack proteins, vitamins and that they are literally starving. Consumers must be given the option to buy or not to buy our products. I claim, as my hon. colleague from Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) said, that we have a responsibility not only as Canadians but also as Christians. Mr. Speaker, we have no right to ignore people who are starving to death. And if they do not know how to feed themselves, it is our duty to teach them how. We all know that milk and dairy products such as cheese are wholesome, completely nutritious foods; therefore, it is our duty to arrange to train them to eat those nutriment which could make up for all the food shortages prevailing in those countries.

The hon. member for Hull (Mr. Isabelle) does understand that and this is why he is planning to go there as a doctor and I can see his point.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at things the way they are, we realize why we are in such a predicament; it is simply because we have not applied elementary principles. We do not seem to know yet that we are producing for the purpose of consuming. We do not understand that yet.

If we were to apply this principle and if instead of avoiding the problem and justifying the lack of action in this area, the Minister of Agriculture had said today that from now on, in order to settle the problem of production surplus and of milk producers' revenues, he would set up a policy which would open the Canadian market "exclusively" to Canadian producers, that if we say to the industrial milk producers that they will have the exclusivity of a market of 24 million people, in my opinion, this would settle the problem and prevent any surplus of milk powder.

[Mr. Matte.]

I already said a word about that; it would be easy to solve the problem through appropriate studies and research and by urging those concerned to conform to this consumption.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that we should not continue to dodge the question and say: No, we do not import cheese, no, we do not import butter. Yet millions of pounds of these products are imported into Canada and the problem will never be resolved that way.

It has always been noticed that there is a lack of consistency between the attitude of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and that of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Jamieson), since we are, as in other industrial areas, invaded—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. I apologize to the hon. member for Champlain, but there is a rule which states that we are not allowed to drink anything but water in the House. I think that the Minister of Agriculture is giving good example by drinking milk, but this is not consistent with the Standing Orders.

The hon. member for Champlain.

An hon. Member: Good show!

Mr. Matte: Mr. Speaker, if the minister drew out the slice of bread and butter he has in his desk, we might find out it comes from New Zealand.

Mr. Speaker, it is therefore essential to urge the Minister of Agriculture, in particular and the government in general to finally introduce a sound policy in such a vital area. It is not even a matter to be discussed, it is fundamental. Consequently, never should measures have been implemented which might discourage if only some of those who remain, so that they can continue to earn their living.

I would even say that it is a kind of sacrilege or scandal to deprive a class of producers as essential as farm producers and, as far as today's debate is concerned, the industrial milk producers. My colleague for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) emphasized this and I shall repeat it, since statistics published in the newspapers last week actually mentioned that there was underconsumption in Canada.

The minister puts forth all kinds of reasons, such as powder milk does not keep. Mr. Speaker, it is also difficult to keep natural milk. But solutions can be found if enough research is made, and everybody knows the milk now being distributed under the brand name *Évangéline*. That milk is good as long as the container remains closed, and it can keep for months, even years.

● (1620)

As to powder milk, the minister feels that we face a major problem because it does not keep for more than 60 or 90 days. But heaven knows how much research is necessary to develop containers like those produced by the Quebec dairies. They designed a container which makes it possible to keep milk almost indefinitely and which is on the market right now. It is on the market right now. We should do the same in other fields. Particularly, as I said, we should never give such reasons when we know that consumption falls far short in Canada. In the morning when you see a single quart of milk at the door and you know that five children under 10 are living in the house,