

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, February 13, 1956

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

## PRIVILEGE

MR. GARDINER—REFERENCE TO REMARKS IN  
DEBATE ON FEBRUARY 10

**Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. When discussing the cost of the present butter policy on Friday, February 10, I pointed out the plan under which institutions had been allowed a discount of 21 cents a pound may cost \$1,500,000. Then I went on to say this:

The important thing about the matter is we started out to prove to our satisfaction one of two things: Either that people or institutions use more butter when they are getting it cheaper or that they may use more butter and less margarine when they get it—

Meaning butter.

—cheaper. The statistics do not indicate that they have done so in this case. They are using just about the same proportion of butter—maybe a little bit more in some places and a little bit less in others—at 40 cents a pound as they used previously at 61 cents and they are using about the same amount of margarine now as they used previously.

At this point the hon. member for Quebec West (Mr. Dufresne) asked a question:

Mr. Dufresne: Has the minister the figures for each province?

Mr. Gardiner: Yes.

Mr. Dufresne: Can he say whether, in the province of Quebec, this arrangement of giving butter to institutions at 40 cents a pound has increased the consumption of butter?

The effective part of my answer was as follows:

As of March 4 . . . in Quebec the number of institutions there was 236 . . . They used 154,000 pounds of butter that month . . . 6,000 pounds of margarine. Then they had other fats, neither margarine nor butter, amounting to 53,000 pounds.

I stated that for the last month:

. . . there are 777 institutions in Quebec now which is about three times as many, and in the last month they used 297,000 pounds of butter, 13,591 pounds of margarine and 103,146 pounds of other fats.

About an hour later, following my address, the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Philpott) said, as recorded at page 1064 of *Hansard* for February 10, 1956:

Could I ask one question about the figures for margarine in Quebec? Some of us were under the impression that the sale of margarine in Quebec was illegal.

I did not answer, but as soon as I could leave the house I attempted to get full information to give to the members, but because the staff had gone I was unable to receive full information. I, therefore, interviewed the *Hansard* editor who informed me the report had already gone to the press. He suggested I should see the Speaker, which I did. I suggested that I be permitted to withhold a small part of the information used in answering the question. I suggested this would necessitate my stating to the members full information regarding the matter, and stated I would make a complete statement to the house when the house opened on Monday. That is what I intend to do at the moment.

I understand the Speaker complied with my suggestion and arranged to have the statistics relating to Quebec and margarine left out of Friday's *Hansard* on the understanding I would replace them on Monday with full particulars.

I saw the Canadian Press and was told that the report had already gone out to the Toronto office. It was suggested later that I might make a statement which would be published along with any report which they put out. I have read the Canadian Press report as it appeared on Saturday morning in the *Montreal Gazette*. In it is a statement which I made to the reporter who saw me in the dining room while I was eating dinner. I stated this to him: "I just read the answer from a record that was placed in my hands, and I would not like it to be considered authentic until I have an opportunity of checking it." They put that in their report, just as I said it, and used the reference to it in the lead to the article. Then, they went on to cover what happened in the house in connection with it.

At this point, I want to thank the Canadian Press for the manner in which they dealt with the whole matter, and the way it was reported, particularly in the only paper in which I read the report. It was probably in all the papers that they supply with reports in much the same language, but they gave a perfectly correct report of what I had said to them and what I said in the house. They added something of their own, which I presume they got in Quebec. They added a statement which was not mine, and I assume