

*The Budget—Mr. A. Lambert*

Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few remarks about the problem of agriculture. I want also to submit to the government some suggestions that I would have liked to make on the occasion of the debate I just mentioned.

Estimates for the year 1970-71 reduce by \$10 million the subsidies for price support of manufacturing milk, and this reduction especially affects the eastern farmers, those from Quebec in particular. And I would like incidentally to congratulate the Canadian Dairy Commission as well as its officials who, while doing their utmost to manage efficiently the funds voted to them by Parliament, must necessarily distribute the grants according to quotas and allotments provided in the estimates passed by Parliament after a recommendation by the cabinet, of course.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) states that there is a surplus of dairy products and that it is to curb production that grants to manufacturing milk producers are being reduced. In my opinion, farm workers are really the only ones to be penalized for their efficiency.

Yet, there is a surplus of workers on the labour market, since the unemployed number over 400,000. And, as far as I know, salaries have not decreased for that reason. I am very happy that there is some legislation to protect the workers in the other sectors of the economy.

There is also a surplus of professional people. How many of them are unemployed? Yet, their fees are certainly not decreasing. If farmers are not given some protection against market variations, I wonder what we shall come to.

Since 1967-68, the number of industrial milk producers registered with the Canadian Dairy Commission has decreased by 70,000. What has become of them? Did they all manage to get a job in other industries or did they simply become welfare recipients?

• (4:40 p.m.)

I do not believe that it would be a good thing for Canada to carry on in this way. I think it would even be better to spend \$1,000 to \$1,500 per farm per year to assist these small industrial milk producers so that they could be proud of making a personal effort rather than pay them \$2,500 in welfare benefits so that they can live miserably, deprived of any personal initiative.

Farms do not sell any more. They are abandoned most of the time by settlers or farmers who have improved them for the past 20 or 30 years. I know that in different parts of

Quebec, some farmers cannot even give them away, when they had hoped to sell them towards the later part of their life in order to live decently.

Our country would still be better served by people concerned with helping themselves to a better life than by people obliged to stay idle. In my opinion, Canada cannot continue in this way. It is not economical.

Governments invite farmers to increase their production but when the effort has been made, they are penalized. This is the result of planning. The great planning experts seem to want to make a living the easy way. If that is their wish, they are fully successful.

The gap between the cost and the price paid by the consumer for a food product is wider than ever. Out of every dollar spent by the consumer, the portion of the farmer has decreased in every field of production. We must, therefore, come to the conclusion that the more the farm product is processed, the smaller the farmer's share.

Milk producers are not the ones to be held responsible for inflation. It is not with an average income as low as \$2,000 per year that milk producers can buy anything at any price. On the contrary, they are the victims of inflation and the austerity measures of the government are a serious threat to their income.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) asks the people to produce more in order to flight inflation. That is what milk producers have been doing and the government is penalizing them for having complied.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few suggestions that could help us solve this tricky problem. I know the Minister of Agriculture knows some of those solutions and will influence his colleagues in the cabinet so as to bring the government to legislate as a true servant of the people, and not as a servant of high finance and economic dictatorship.

As regards the growth of purchasing power, I should like to congratulate the previous speaker for having dealt with this problem very intelligently and realistically. Indeed, he spoke about the lack of purchasing power among those who are really in need. I agree with all his remarks to that effect.

If sound common sense had its way, the purchasing power in families where the father is generally the only one to derive an income from his work would follow this rule: **Equal work, equal pay. In a just society, one should add: everyone to his needs.**