

Agricultural Products Board

milking in Canada now, five years after the war, is 3,667,000. The number milked in 1950 was 3,609,000. The reduction is not great, and could be brought up very quickly if conditions were to change to warrant it.

It is interesting to note that during the five years preceding the war the top grade of butter averaged 24·8 cents a pound, and the top grade of cheese, at Montreal, averaged 12·9 cents. In the first three years of the war the average prices of those two commodities were 34·9 and 21·2 respectively. They are now 63 to 64 cents for butter and 32 to 36 for cheese. In other words, it would not appear that the only matter to which the farmer is giving consideration, when he decides he is going to produce, is the price that he will obtain or even the relationship between the price he obtains and the price he has to pay for the articles he must buy or for the service he must have.

I believe it was the hon. member for Brant-Wentworth this afternoon who hit the nail on the head when he quoted the reasons given by the past president of the dairy council as to why farmers do not produce more. I think he gave the real reasons. They were read to the house this afternoon. This same question was raised as to whether he meant exactly what he said. He said that he thought the real reason why farmers were not producing more milk and not milking more cows was because they could get more money for doing something else. In addition, he went on to suggest that they got it doing something which they did not find quite so binding upon their time and which did not require them to do things which they were not so much in favour of doing but would have to do in order to get money out of the production of milk. I think that has some bearing on it, and I think everyone agrees that it has some bearing.

We are able to make money at present out of doing things which at other times we were not able to make money doing. Therefore we take that choice rather than producing these products. But when one puts all the facts together one must conclude that the dairy farmer is obtaining more for his products than ever before. It will be said at once that his costs are higher. The question is as to which has increased the greater amount, and I have already put the figures on the record with regard to that matter.

There is only one other argument that has been produced here today, and which is advanced continuously, with which I should like to deal. It is an argument, used quite frequently, which in my opinion is not sound. It is stated over and over that the constant sale of heifers and cows to the

United States and cows to the butcher suggests that farmers are quitting dairy farming. There are cases where that is true but an examination of the statistics will indicate that the dairy farmer is really taking advantage of another source of revenue. There are not so many calves being vealed. Calves are being retained to milking age and placed in stalls vacated by cows which have been sold either for butchering or for milking elsewhere. Some of the milk cows are being sold to the United States and heifers take their place in Canada.

A better price can be obtained for aged cows as canners and cutters than ever before. Members of this house will recall that in 1938, the year before the war, this government paid farmers in the drought area \$2.25 a hundred for canner and cutter cows, and right now you would probably get 20 cents a pound for the same type of cow. Farmers are now selling cows for canners that in earlier days they would probably have kept milking. In short, in addition to a better price for dairy products Canadian dairy farmers have the best market for breeding stock for export to the United States and South America which they have ever experienced. How any member can get up in the house and argue that is not a good thing for the farmer I cannot understand. The farmers of this country are not only raising herds for the purpose of producing milk, butter and cheese. They are raising dairy herds because they have some of the best breeding stock in the world from which to produce dairy stock.

Last year or the year before, when I was at the royal winter fair in Toronto, I had the privilege of having my picture taken with a bull. I was very much honoured in having my picture taken with that bull. He was sold to a buyer in South America for \$15,000. When a farmer in this country can sell a bull for \$15,000 to anybody I think he is doing a good job for himself and a good job for his country. I do not think there is any ground for criticism in that. Of course these farmers are not milking quite as many cows as they were but I venture to say they are getting as much milk from the number of cows they are milking. As a matter of fact the statistics already quoted show that they are getting as much milk from the cows they are milking now as they got from whatever number of cows they were milking prior to the war. I think farmers generally are doing pretty much what I do myself. I do not keep dairy cattle because I do not like milking either, and some other people do not like milking. But I keep cattle, and they are beef cattle. As long as I had grade cattle