

management committee. Second, we recognize that weather played its part. Third, the normal increase in fluid milk we expected turned to be a decrease of 1.1 million, which causes a surplus of 3.3 million hundredweight of milk.

The government is also responsible, on the one hand, because it did encourage to produce more. And looking at our production in past years, we were right in asking for an increase in production. Fifth, manufacturers produced less cheese, perhaps to cut back their inventories by shipping their surplus milk and butter to the Canadian Dairy Commission, thereby increasing their profits by not having to pay storage costs. But, by the same token, they were forcing the Canadian Dairy Commission to support inventories. Sixth, that was the first opportunity the milk producers had to increase their quotas without charge, without having to hand out a large sum of money. Seventh, the difficulties encountered with respect to the price of butter caused the producers to keep their cast cows which, although not champions, still were giving milk and substantially contributing to the surplus. These examples: There are 90,000 cows too many in Quebec in 1975-76. Eight—

● (1720)

Mr. Rondeau: Come on. After all!

Mr. Tessier: I was not referring to the member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau). Eight, the possibility for the producers of fluid milk of adding a second quota of up to 900,000 pounds of industrial milk.

Nine, the lure of "income", stirred up by the inclusion of a \$1.00 increase in the long term policy for 1975-76 was also conducive to increased production. Ten, we have seen cattle breeders come back to the dairy industry. The result was that we had to deal with a surplus and with tremendous maintenance costs. Mr. Speaker, the question is this: who must pay the consequences of the solution to this problem for which the producer is not the only one to blame? At this moment, the responsibility lies with the government and more particularly with the Canadian Dairy Commission. On the other hand, the Treasury Board seems to be willing to free the Government from this problem by referring it to the Canadian Dairy Commission, which, because of budgetary constraints and the obligations assumed with respect to the surplus has no alternative but to switch it back into the hands of the producers.

True enough, we on the government side say that we do not agree with such a cut. If we were to listen to the supply management committee, and I repeat, the supply management committee, would not the real culprits be required to pay for their mistake? The answer is no, if we only go after the producer.

Are we not by the same token distorting the dairy policy of which it was said only in 1975 that it was a long-term one? We must then absolutely reject the management committee proposals. Are we not having the minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) facing the fact that there are various solutions to similar problems in the area of agriculture? How shall we explain them, and we insist on being consistent with ourselves in order to provide our producers with a similar solution, wherever they are in this country? The government must require a certain amount of control

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and, indeed, producers are ready to accept it, because they consider it as absolutely necessary. Nevertheless, let us not confuse—and this applies to members of the Social Credit Party of Canada as well—control and production reduction.

We should implement, and we do insist on it, a genuine system of control. We should be provided with the necessary tools to apply such a control; otherwise, what would be the base of such a legislation? Producers will be justified to ask whom they shall trust. It will also make clear that if we are to approve the supply management committee's proposal it is the farm producer's income that will be directly affected and moreover it will go against the dairy policy announced previously and strongly defended in the past. Not only will the farm producer's income be affected but so will the rural economy which has no other way out than compensate for the present economic fluctuations.

Let the management committee control and let us assume our own responsibilities. That is the kind of message the minister should make and if he should ever meet dear Mrs. Plumtre, he could pass her the word.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Clermont): Order, please. The time allotted to the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Tessier) has expired. He cannot carry on without the unanimous consent of the House.

Does the hon. member for Compton have the unanimous consent of the House to proceed?

Some hon. Members: No.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Clermont): Order. I regret, but I have heard some nays. Therefore, I will recognize the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau).

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, first I should like to sincerely thank the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) for having given us today the opportunity to hold a debate on such an important and vital matter as that of the dairy industry in Canada.

I also wish to thank all farmers who, in spite of their heavy task, have covered long distances in such bad weather in order to come here once more and state their problems and listen to those hon. gentlemen who stay in the same rut unless we provoke them in this House. Even if we are accused of indulging in petty politics, Mr. Speaker, it is the only means at our disposal to get a reaction from the hon. members opposite who are as mute as a fish on agricultural issues when farmers are absent from this institution.

I shall not waste my time and answer the nonsense of the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Tessier). I shall try to consider the weak answer we were expecting from the minister responsible for agriculture in Canada. I shall not waste my time with such nonsense because the few minutes at our disposal are too valuable.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that if some hon. members thought that Social Creditors do not know anything about dairy matters, I for one, and particularly the hon. member for Lotbinière who introduced the motion today—his riding alone produces 10 per cent of the milk production in