

*Supply—Agriculture*

Here, we do not at all agree with the minister. In order to hand out to its patrons the equivalent of 30 cents for a hundredweight of milk, a factory should have an average production of 8½ pounds of cheese for every hundred pounds of milk, which means that the net would have an average fat content of nearly 3.3 per cent and more to be classified 100 per cent, Canada, first grade. If we recall that during the 12 months of 1963, the province of Quebec succeeded in having 86.8 per cent (in Ontario 90.3 per cent) of its cheese classified as first grade, and further that, during the heavy production months, the average fat content of our vats is nearer 3.2 per cent than 3.3 per cent, we have to infer that in case of conditions similar to that of 1963, the producers-suppliers of the cheese factories will be forced, on the whole, to accept a cut of 5 cents in their delivery price, in comparison to last year's price.

And the editorial also deals with the bonus for cheese exports to the United Kingdom. As a matter of fact, it should be kept in mind that, last year, the farm organizations in Canada asked for the reinstatement of that 4 cent bonus not only for the cheese exported to the United Kingdom, but for all kinds of cheese.

This premium was again cut by another cent, so that the way things are going, two years hence the Liberal party will have taken away completely what the Conservative government had granted during its term in office.

Mr. Chairman, I believe my time is running out, and I wish—

[Text]

**Mr. Winch:** May I ask the hon. member a question. In view of the fact that the hon. member is discussing an important phase of agriculture, and in view of the fact that I understand there are 129 elected Liberals in this parliament and only nine of them are here now, would the hon. member consider requesting the Chairman to rise, report progress, and request leave to sit again when there are more government members present?

**Mr. Benidickson:** You are pretty thin over there too.

[Translation]

**Mr. Vincent:** Mr. Chairman, last year, I had noticed, and was getting used to it, that whenever we were talking about agriculture the minister was not in the house. I have noticed it, at least on one occasion. But on several occasions, I found that in sittings of committees we were 13 or 15 Conservatives as against one or two Liberals. The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette) even told me that Liberals were not interested in taking part in an attendance contest, but only in discussing agriculture.

That is why I was not surprised this year to find only a handful of Liberal members, perhaps eight or ten, out of 129 present in the House of Commons.

When I spoke of feed grain last March 30, I stated that the government should introduce legislation enabling eastern farmers to set up a feed grain board. The same evening the Minister of Agriculture replied that price stability was an accomplished fact.

The next day, that is on March 31, I asked a question on the orders of the day. I had to wait, one month, one week and a few days before I got a reply that I already got the day before.

Once again, I do not question the statement made by the parliamentary secretary on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture to the effect that, for instance, barley was selling for \$2.30 in September, \$2.48 in October, \$2.45 in November, \$2.42 in December, \$2.46 in January, \$2.41 in February and \$2.43 in March. I do not challenge those figures because they were probably secured from the federal bureau of statistics, as they look better than the figures of the Department of Agriculture. If the latter had been more favourable, they would have been used.

The parliamentary secretary was speaking of the price per hundredweight paid by retailers to wholesalers for barley and oats. I have here a price list which was sent to Mr. Louis Roy, a merchant in St. Perpetué, county of Nicolet, by a Montreal wholesaler whose telephone number is 931-1881, if anyone wants to check. According to that list, on September 7, 1963, barley was selling for \$2.23½ per hundredweight as compared with \$2.27 in October. I myself phoned a wholesaler in Montreal on January 8, 1964, to ask him the price of barley; I was told that it was \$2.59½, that the price of oats was \$2.55 to \$2.59¼ and the price of No. 5 wheat \$3.35½.

And those are price lists that retailers received from the companies which sell oats or barley and those retailers had to pay those list prices.

[Text]

**The Deputy Chairman:** I regret to interrupt the hon. member but I must advise him that the time allocated to him has expired.

**Mr. Muir (Lisgar):** Mr. Chairman, in rising to take part in this debate I should first like to express to the minister our great satisfaction that he, with generous assistance from the official opposition, was able to resist the pressures of his cabinet colleagues in what was apparently an attempt to split the Department of Agriculture right down the