

Agricultural Support Prices

in the hon. member's point that the department of the Minister of Agriculture had published a pamphlet indicating that there was on the books a statute of this parliament entitled the agricultural rehabilitation and development act, whereas in fact there is—

Mr. Pearson: No such thing.

Mr. Speaker:—such a bill before the house for second reading. It may be that a reading of the pamphlet would support that view. I have not had time to give a full reading to it, but the description on the face of it is "Agricultural rehabilitation and development act". The first paragraph reads as follows:

On December 15, 1960 the Minister of Agriculture introduced to the House of Commons a resolution concerned with improving the economic position of our farmers.

The resolution introduced the agricultural rehabilitation and development act, or A.R.D.A. for short. I think the implication that the act has been passed is not quite as strong as has been asserted. However, there is a point that no one should assert that parliament has acted before it has done so, particularly a minister. If it is borne out by this document, I think the hon. member would have a point to deal with by motion, but as he has himself indicated that he will not submit a motion, I think enough has been said to close the matter.

(Translation):

Mr. Boulanger (Drummond-Arthabaska): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I wish to ask—

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have indicated that I think any further discussion without a motion before the house would be improper.

BANKING AND COMMERCE

Fifth report of standing committee on banking and commerce—Mr. Cathers.

AGRICULTURE**BUTTER AND CHEESE—ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUPPORT PRICES**

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the government has authorized the agricultural stabilization board to continue the present level of price support for the dairy industry for the period May 1, 1961, to April 30, 1962.

There are two dairy products presently under price support. Price support for butter is 64 cents per pound for Canada first grade creamery butter scoring 40-93, basis delivery Montreal, with appropriate price differentials for other grades and qualities. Ontario cheese, Canada first grade waxed, f.o.b. warehouse, is presently supported at

[Mr. Speaker.]

32 cents per pound; and Quebec cheese, Canada first grade waxed, basis delivery Montreal, is supported at 31½ cents per pound.

The price support for these two dairy commodities for the 12-month period May 1, 1961, to April 30, 1962, will continue at these levels. In addition, 25 cents per hundred pounds will continue to be paid for whole milk delivered for manufacturing purposes, exclusive of milk from producers who sell a portion of their milk in the fluid bottled milk market.

The stabilization board will continue for the present to support the price of butter and cheese by purchasing these products from suppliers at the prescribed support levels. Should any change be made subsequently in the method of support, an announcement will be made well in advance to give the industry sufficient time to make any necessary adjustments. Regardless of the method of support used, however, the level of support to producers now authorized will continue during the 12-month period from May 1, 1961, to April 30, 1962.

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, all one can say with regard to this announcement by the minister is that the statement does not fully comply with the requests made by the dairy producers, as stated recently in the brief presented to the government by the federation of agriculture.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, in the light of all the propaganda that is being directed across the country against price support programs for the dairy industry, I am pleased that the government has announced the continuation of support prices on these dairy products. I always give the government credit when credit is due.

The announcement will reassure the dairy industry, particularly as the minister has assured dairy producers that the government will continue to purchase their products at these fixed support prices. This means a real guarantee and is in no way a phony guarantee such as would come from an average price deficiency support program. The minister has left the door open to a change in method, but he did seem to assure the dairy industry that even if the method is changed these particular guarantees to the producers will be maintained. Apparently for the coming year the dairy industry will have the support prices continued that they have enjoyed to date.

The minister left unanswered the question whether consumers will be allowed to purchase butter at lower prices in order