

The Budget—Mr. Blair

forests, but the important part of conservation is that concerning the proper use of the soil because so many things are dependent on it. A million dollar dam will be of little use if the soil is eroded and the rivers and lakes fill up. What was formerly good farming land will then become desert and will have to be abandoned as far as agriculture is concerned.

I said that there was an important relationship between conservation and the dairying industry. The raising of livestock provides the best and cheapest method of putting back into the soil most of the good which the raising of crops has taken from it. Good dairy farms do not become worn out and useless. A well balanced dairying program returns the refuse from the dairy barn to the land, plus the necessary commercial fertilizer. A competent dairy farmer keeps up the fertility of his land; he builds up his land, he does not destroy it.

It is interesting to note that after years of cropping a pasturage will not likely have those ingredients which will provide the quantity of mineral foods and vitamins which are necessary and which may affect the health of our population. There is no use talking conservation if we allow farmers continually to crop off their land, to cut down their wood lots in an effort to make a living for their families, without restoring and revitalizing the soil. Such a policy is little short of national suicide.

The place to start organizing conservation is on the farms, and the way to do that is to do something to stop the water running off the fields, to conserve moisture and to prevent erosion which is constantly increasing. In order to do this we require first-class farmers with up-to-date methods. You cannot expect a discouraged farmer to practise this kind of farming. As I have said there must be a healthy dairying industry in order to preserve the land. This dairying industry should not be made up of discouraged farmers. It should be an industry which will give an adequate return for the investment; it should be an industry which will stop soil exhaustion and thereby aid soil conservation.

The link between the dairy industry and conservation cannot be too strongly emphasized. One cannot expect under present-day conditions that the dairy farmer will show much interest in conservation. He is much more likely to mine his soil to the limit in an effort to produce as cheaply as he can, and then when the soil is non-productive to move on to some other land or into the town or city where we have our program of development and industrialization. Factory

wages and shorter hours will look more attractive to a chap when he is discouraged with prices and competition.

In the long-term view we can therefore visualize abandoned farms unless there is a future for the dairying industry much brighter than exists now. It is possible to see abandoned farms in Ontario at the present time. I am sure that many hon. members have been in localities in Ontario where farms have been abandoned.

I come now to some of the factors which adversely affect the dairying industry. It is true that the farmers have a high-priced market for their export milch cows. During the past year approximately half a million live cattle were shipped to the United States, an increase of 40,000 over 1949. It is true that there are high current prices for almost everything that can be turned into hamburger meat. At one time the dairy farmer looked on the raising of cattle as a side line, but now the situation is reversed and most farmers look on milk as a side line. They are selling many of their calves, heifers and older animals. It is a poor calf that will not bring \$35, and even an old bull will bring \$400 or \$500 for hamburger meat. He can sell any kind of animal that is considered to be beef at what were hitherto unheard of prices.

The export market for purebred dairy animals, even the poorest, has been exceptionally good. The net result is that the man raising dairy cows has not had to bother too much about his milk cheques. It is paying him more to let the calves run with the cows than send his milk to the manufacturing plant at something over \$2 per hundred pounds, which was the 1950 price for milk used in the production of cheese and butter. The farmer has to live and he certainly cannot with what he gets from his milk. On the average farm this price means keeping four or five cows for a whole day in order to get \$2. If a farmer has no other revenue he would show a loss in his books for last year's operations.

It is interesting to note some of the figures obtained as a result of a cost of production survey carried on by the Ontario department of agriculture in connection with the dairy herd improvement association. These figures were given by Dr. H. R. Patterson at the Ontario cheese producers meeting in Toronto last January. The experiment was carried out in Lanark county.

The figures show that between May 1, 1949, and April 30, 1950, the average dairyman in the Lanark association lost \$147 on his milk production. The association is made