

Oral Questions

regard to the beef subsidy program. In view of the continuing confused and depressed cattle markets across Canada, and in view of the meeting just last night with the cattlemen, is the minister prepared to make a statement as to the beef subsidy after two weeks of operation?

In particular, will the minister tell us whether he is prepared to extend the deadline for A-3 and A-4 cattle to ease the very heavy deliveries now being made of these heavier cattle, resulting in still lower prices? Further, will the minister be including grades B and C in the subsidy program?

● (1140)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): All I can say at this time is that I held discussions, shortly before entering the House with people other than the Canadian Cattlemen's Association who feel they also represent beef producers. I feel I must make the statement that the present program will be continued or that a new program, if one is to be devised, will take its place. But a statement of this kind will be made later this day, Mr. Speaker.

DAIRYING—NEW SUPPORT PROGRAM—POSITION OF FLUID MILK SHIPPERS

Mr. William C. Frank (Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister a supplementary question relating to subsidies. Even though the minister's statement on the new milk policy for 1974-75 will be welcomed by the industrial shippers, may I ask what consideration the hon. gentleman is giving to the fluid milk shippers whose costs are also escalating and who will now be receiving only 40 cents more, in Ontario, than the industrial price?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): I am sure the hon. members knows that the fluid milk shippers come within the jurisdiction of their own provincial marketing boards and in general they are looked after pretty well. I think he should also recognize that industrial milk shippers are involved in a high quality type of production, practically the same as many fluid milk shippers, and many of their products are shipped in the same tank truck, though they are paid at different rates. A great deal of confusion exists even in that industry. The new policy we hope to establish for the future should place milk producers on a more equal basis.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have the impression that we have been sidetracked from beef to milk. Perhaps we should have tried to deal with supplementaries on the matter raised by the hon. member for Medicine Hat before turning to this subject. But I will recognize the hon. member for Middlesex and then the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley. I assume he will be returning to beef.

Mr. Frank: I am well aware that provincial boards had the jurisdiction, as the minister stated, prior to his program last fall of subsidizing the consumers through the five-cent program. I am satisfied, though, that they are now controlled by this program and that individual provinces cannot raise their prices—

[Mr. Hargrave.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. member ask his supplementary. Without referring particularly to the hon. member's question, I am wondering whether an effort might not be made today by all hon. members asking questions, and all ministers replying, to limit the time taken for both questions and answers. I am sure this would be helpful.

Mr. Frank: My question is: does the program the minister introduced last year not prevent provincial boards from increasing the price?

Mr. Whelan: No, Mr. Speaker. Every agreement we have signed with the provinces has a provision in it whereby, if they can prove costs have increased by 7½ per cent to 10 per cent—each province operates under a different formula—we have an obligation. We have always met that obligation when they have presented proper facts and figures to us.

SUBSIDY TO BEEF PRODUCERS—ALLEGED POOR ADVICE BY DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS AND LACK OF CONSULTATION WITH INDUSTRY

Mr. Norval Horner (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Agriculture. Because of the chaos created by the recently announced beef subsidy, and in view of the fact proper consultation was not held with people in the industry, is the minister prepared to deal with those members of his department who misdirected him or, failing this, is he prepared to tender his resignation from the cabinet?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Horner (Battleford-Kindersley): It is high time this government began to answer for its mistakes.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I could say that question was a lot of bio-mass material. Anyone who says that the trade was not consulted does not know the facts, and does not care to know the facts, either.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DAIRYING—REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO NEWFOUNDLAND MILK PRODUCERS BY LOWERING COST OF FEED GRAIN

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture a question. What steps is he prepared to take to assist Newfoundland producers? The price of milk in that province increased by 5 cents recently raising the price of a quart of milk to 55 cents. Is the minister prepared to assist Newfoundland producers by bringing down the cost of feed grain, thus enabling the cost of milk in Newfoundland to be reduced?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member knows that Newfoundland producers are assisted with respect to feed grain supplies to a greater extent than any other feed grain users in Canada. The rest would be up to the prov-