

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

glad to see that the parliamentary secretary is here; having been a member of farmers' associations, he is the right man to provide us with a workable solution.

This answer should relate to a question raised at a meeting held with farmers, on April 28, 1969. Four members of the house of commons attended that meeting during which a problem kept cropping up namely that farmers had no official representatives with the responsible authorities; they urged us to ask the minister whether he could allow them to be represented on the task force.

They wanted to know whether the minister would accept the setting up of a negotiating committee made up of delegates of the Dairy Commission and of the representatives of the agricultural organizations and would let farmers be heard before the official dairy policy were announced.

We feel that the hon. minister and his parliamentary secretary should give an answer to the farmers who put the question, so that the possibility of establishing a negotiating unit might be considered.

• (4:20 p.m.)

They criticized the government for not allowing them to give evidence and to discuss dairy policies at the level of the C.F.U. organization. The parliamentary secretary knows all about the work of the C.F.U. and that is why I asked the Minister the following question:

Could the Minister tell the house whether it is his intention to allow the C.F.U. in the Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean area to be officially accredited as the negotiation unit for questions regarding our area, especially as far as the guaranteed income of farmers is concerned?

It does seem to show that I saw things eye to eye with the farmers. Where their income is at stake, it seems normal that they should have their say when their share of revenue for a dairy year is being decided upon. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary is willing to tell the house whether some formula has been devised to provide closer discussions between farm organizations and the Dairy Commission or the department represented here by the Commission. This should be the first step towards an agreement between the farmers and the Dairy Commission which has final decision as to what it will be able to offer to milk producers. The Commission determines also the income those farmers may expect for the coming year.

I simply wish to direct my question on the specific aspect, of establishing a negotiating

[Mr. Gauthier.]

unit so that farmers will be able to discuss and to participate in the formulation of the government's dairy policies.

Mr. Florian Côté (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as an answer to the question asked by the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier), I think he knows as well as I do that the government, when discussing farm policies or any change in these policies, never fails to take into consideration, all recommendations coming from farm organizations.

I would like to point out to him that he missed a very good opportunity to let the population know that their representative is a member of the committee on agriculture.

So, in that capacity, along with a few other hon. members, he might have explained the beneficial effects of the Canadian Dairy Commission, which negotiates directly with farm associations.

In the May 7 issue of *La Terre de chez-nous*—not so long ago—the new farm policy was announced. On page 12, the Quebec Federation of Manufactured Milk Producers explains the beneficial effects of the Canadian Dairy Commission. It is said that such results were obtained due to the commendable co-operation of the Federation of Manufactured Milk Producers.

I suggest that the hon. member should explain to his constituents that good results were obtained, that considerable work was done, and that the Federation of Manufactured Milk Producers co-operated.

After all, the president of the Federation of Manufactured Milk Producers, who lives in the Saguenay region, is a member of the board of directors of the Canadian Dairy Commission.

If such co-operation is required, it is because the hon. member for Roberval was a bit concerned when he was asked that question, and he did not know that those who were asking it were members of a committee who happens to have negotiated the decisions taken by the Canadian Dairy Commission.

The hon. member for Roberval, every time he attends the meetings of the committee on agriculture, expresses, I think, worthwhile opinions. I would ask him if it is possible, as we have a role to play as members of parliament, whatever the party we belong to, to try to say a great deal of work is done, because farm associations are not in a position to criticize us when they cannot understand our policies.