

[English]

Mr. Whelan: I said that I have been given to understand that they followed the correct and the normal procedure. This is within the agreement we have. I am sure they are not happy about it at all, from what I have heard, but it is within the terms of the agreement and they all recognize it.

● (1440)

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put another supplementary.

As it is very important and as in the last few months the government policy tended to gradually increase prices for the benefit of industrial milk producers so that they may be able to face production costs and have a reasonable margin of profit, will the minister take into account the representations of the Federation of Industrial Milk Producers since such representations will obviously better enlighten the minister on the real situation of industrial milk producers?

[English]

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the record of this government, and my record as Minister of Agriculture concerning industrial milk producers speaks for itself. The industrial milk producers of this nation are treated better than any other industrial milk producers in the world. We will continue to do our best for them and will listen to the brief the Canadian dairy farmers will present on behalf of our industrial milk producers.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

CROCUS FOODS—SUGGESTION FEASIBILITY STUDIES ON ESTABLISHMENT OF PROPOSED PLANT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO MILK PRODUCERS

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion relating to Crocus Foods. As a number of public meetings have been held in Manitoba in recent weeks about this plant, and as there is deep division about the proposed building of this plant and provincial government involvement in milk processing, will the minister indicate to the House if feasibility studies are available, so that decisions might be based on fact rather than on the basis of discussions which have taken place without the benefit of feasibility studies?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I accept the final few words of the hon. gentleman's suggestion that there is a lack of feasibility studies. Since the matter was first brought to my attention, I made a number of inquiries and was in touch with some of his colleagues with regard to the inquiries. Just today I received the most recent submissions from the company, setting forth certain fundamental changes in the structure of the proposed corporation. I am examining these now and will obviously need to decide soon, because the whole construction phase depends on something being done. I should add

Oral Questions

that strong representations have been made on both sides of the issue, which makes this an exceedingly difficult question. I shall be glad to discuss it with the hon. member, if he so desires.

Mr. Epp: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I did not suggest that there are no feasibility studies. I suggested they are not available to producers. Will the minister make certain aspects of the feasibility studies available to the two producer groups who do not agree with the project, in order that they may know how the proposals will affect the future of their industry?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must understand that it does not fall within my authority or responsibility to make such documentation available within the province. Our role essentially is to decide for or against an incentive grant. The government of Manitoba is carrying on negotiations with various producer groups. My information today is that the Manitoba Milk Producers Marketing Board has been involved and made satisfactory arrangements with Crocus Foods. The only question remaining in my mind is whether that arrangement, and what flows from it, will be sufficient to allay the fears of those who feel it will harm other aspects of the dairy industry.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

SUGGESTED ADOPTION OF NEW DAIRY POLICY

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture.

In view of the questions already asked by my colleague, the hon. member for Bellechasse and considering that last week's decision implies lower income for milk producers, would the minister be prepared after this commitment to ensure them a sufficient income, to put forward a new policy which could correct this loss incurred by milk producers?

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to add to what I told other hon. members. I said we will listen to the Canadian dairy farmers' presentation and review the problem of the European community's placing on the world market 600,000 pounds of skim milk powder.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, I have a last supplementary.

Since the decision taken by the Canadian Dairy Commission, which seems supported by the Minister of Agriculture, has been taken before consulting the Federation of Milk Producers, can the minister tell us why he did not first consult milk producers before taking that decision?

[English]

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Dairy Commission has been advising me on behalf of all dairy producers