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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Butter Subsidy Idea Discussed

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OUR FEDERATION of Agriculture endorsed this week the Dairy Farmers of Canada request for a federal subsidy of 14 cents per pound for butter. The idea is to lower the price that much to make it more competitive with margarine.

The dairy farmers will take a two-cent per pound cut in the federal floor price of 64 cents on any surplus butter the government has to buy. So the actual subsidy, as I see it, would be 12 cents.

Certain production controls are incorporated in the proposal, I'm told by Fred Kitson, president of the P.E.I. Dairymen's Association.

THE FEDERAL government turned down the subsidy proposal twice last year. But they'll be approached again. I can understand their position for they're facing consumer reaction and they far outnumber butter producers.

I sampled consumer reaction in our newsroom here and found five for and two against the subsidy idea. Reactions ranged from "I never use margarine, it can't be compared to butter", to the person who said "I haven't used five pounds of butter in the last two years and we would normally use 100 pounds a year in our house."

The man added "I wouldn't pay any more than 46 cents a pound for butter." Butter runs about 70 cents.

One who favors the subsidy said "the people of Canada will be paying it but since mostly everything else is subsidized including manufacturing, why not give the dairy people this subsidy."

But he added "I think they should allow the sale of margarine here. I don't use it, but the people who do want it should have it available."

"Subsidy On Overproduction"

ONE MAN told me "I can't see any sense in subsidizing overproduction, and that's what's implied."

One who favors the subsidy welcomes the idea of a butter price cut "because I like butter much better but I can't afford to buy it now". A young man, he's just getting started on the business of home making and every cent counts.

I didn't pick the people I asked. I met them on a stroll around the office, but I doubt the five to two proportion favoring the subsidy would apply across the country.

But something must be done. Pierre Cote is the president of the National Dairy Council of Canada. He says "the billion-dollar dairy business is in the worst surplus mess in its history."

BUTTER CONSUMPTION, he warns, "is tumbling at the rate of one million pounds per month while total milk production is smashing all previous records."

His most convincing statement is "there is no dairy product that cannot be imitated today, and present policies accelerate the replacement of dairy foods by vegetable oil imitations which retail at much lower prices.

"Vegetable oil milk, cream, cheese and ice cream are already on the market in many countries", and Cote adds "unless government policy permits us to make our product competitive, these imitation products will undoubtedly be marketed in Canada with the same disastrous effect oleomargarine had on butter."

If anyone takes the warning lightly, think of what's happened to some of the old standard clothing materials.

### Serge Has Almost Disappeared

"WE ONLY sell 12 suits of wool serge a year on the average now, and they're special order", a clothing store operator told me yesterday.

Terelyne, Dacron and Nylon are just some of the substitutes most of us wear now. Even the worsteds have synthetic fibres in them now, and some of them are improvements. One, I was told, enables a suit to keep its press permanently. That's one I want to have a look at.

GETTING BACK back to the livestock product substitutes, I read several years ago where South American researchers were trying to manufacture synthetic meat. I sometimes wonder what the face of the future will look like.

The future of the livestock industry is vitally important here. Farming is our basic industry. We have fishing as a secondary industry and we have a growing tourist industry. I don't like to think what would happen if we lost the main industry. Most people find it tough enough to make ends meet now.

### Sowens Reactions Still Comes In

REACTIONS to that Sowens story continue to amaze me. Mrs. Mary MacLeod, Westmount in Cape Breton, N.S., tells me "I have seen the dish made of the juice of husks and middlings of oats" and she thinks the correct Gaelic spelling is "Fhuarach", pronounced like "foorach".

And I forgot last week to acknowledge a letter from Mrs. Catherine O'Donnell in Avondale who wrote me an interesting comment on the old dish which J.A. MacKenzie, Kensington first brought to my attention.

JACK MACRAE, Tea Hill who was a popular mail courier for many years until ill health forced a break in his service, is another who has offered comments.

Not everyone liked it. Comments ranged from Wallie Walker's enthusiastic "it was good stuff" to several who said their parents made it but they didn't like it themselves.

One person suggested it was sometimes used in her home as a spring tonic.

### She Lifted Barrel Of Flour

I TALKED of "Sthapach" some time ago and Mrs. Percy Downe, Charlottetown who was born in Springton, reminds me that Mary Stewart who lived in Stanchel, once got a free barrel of flour from Samuel Kennedy, by lifting it into her truck wagon at his Breadalbane store. The barrel weighed 200 pounds.

Mary was very fond of the old dish of oatmeal and thick cream, and some of her neighbours used to tell her that's what made her so strong, Mrs. Downs tells me.

AN OLD Rose Valley story said she took two young men and banged their heads together one night, when they insisted on being troublesome at a dance she was attending.

Samuel Kennedy was a former member of our Legislature, I believe. He was the father of the late Samuel Kennedy, a former mayor of Charlottetown and grandfather of Sam Kennedy, well known among P.E.I. horsemen.

### I'm Not A Probable Candidate

MY FRIEND Ralph Cameron suggested me as an acceptable Liberal candidate for Queens in a by-line story he wrote for these papers this week. I want to thank my colleague for the kind words he said about me, but I'm not interested in the candidate idea.

A return to politics would involve personal and family sacrifices that I cannot contemplate at this time. Ralph had me teamed up with B.B. (Bus) Jones, Bunbury and again he was kind. I couldn't think of a better fellow to have as a colleague if I was going to offer.

If you wonder at the word "friend" I use in connection with this Cameron man, I really mean it. If that surprises some of you who read the guest sport columns we did last year for Pius Calaghan and Mike Hennessey, I should explain that our fights were "not for real."