DAIRY INDUSTRY REPORT

The controversial report of the Dairy Industry Committee of Enquiry has received a fair amount of publicity, especially those sections which dairy farmers would find distasteful. Since the report has been issued I find that people have sometimes forgotten the Committee was first established because of difficulties facing the dairy industry and because of the inability to sell butter overseas at anything except a loss and because of the divided responsibilities between the States and the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has the responsibility of stabilisation and of the overseas marketing while the States have the responsibility of closer settlement policies which can vitally affect the industry.

Although some of the recommendations in the report are most controversial it is clear that the Committee has done a great deal of work in assembling basic information that should be most useful to the industry in planning the industry's future.

Some uneasiness has been expressed by certain sections of the industry by one or two of the recommendations in the report. For my part, if I were a dairy farmer, I would not feel unduly disturbed. There are many people in the Parliament who are fully aware of the social and economic importance of the industry and who will safeguard the industry's future.

The Government and the Minister have not made any statement regarding the report for the simple reason they want the industry organisations to examine the report fully, after which I am quite sure there will be full discussions between the Minister and industry leaders.

There will, I feel, be plenty of time in which to examine this report. It would be most unlikely that any action of any kind would follow this report, if at all, until after the end of the present stabilisation period.

Whatever may be done as a result of this report I am confident will be done in a spirit of co-operation between the industry and the Government, and that nothing will be done that will in any way jeopardise or undermine the industry's future. It is my belief that the way in which the industry and the Government has managed to work together in the past should be proof that this will continue in the future.