

MILK VENDORS, ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS

**258. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

I refer to recently approved additional payments to some former milk vendors, in which multiples of the annual gross product of the round in the year to June 1994 for milk products was set at 2.6 for wholesale rounds and 1.0 for household rounds in the metropolitan area, and 1.8 for wholesale and 0.8 for household rounds in country areas.

- (1) Which areas have been classified as metropolitan and country?
- (2) What are the criteria used for deciding those classifications?
- (3) Why is there a difference in the multiples for metropolitan and country rounds?
- (4) Was any consideration given to the difference between rapidly growing areas, such as south west coastal towns and other more stagnant areas?
- (5) If not, why not?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank Hon Barry House for some notice of the question. Regrettably I do not have the answer as yet. Hopefully it will come in, but I will try to address those parts of the question I can answer without reference to records.

- (1)-(5) The classification of areas would have been done on some objective basis, presumably something like the metropolitan region scheme boundaries, or something similar; however, I will confirm that when I get the information. That addresses question (2) on whether the criteria were inside or outside the MRS boundary, for example.

In answer to (3), the additional payment that the Government has recently made was based very carefully on the recommendations of the report of the Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance, from memory reports Nos 3, 6 and 10. I think those are the three reports. They are the reports of that standing committee dealing with this issue. The primary recommendation of report No 3 established the logical rationale for the differential between country and city and between wholesale rounds and household rounds. We adhered as closely as we possibly could, to the recommendations that were made, although the committee itself made no recommendations of the country rounds quantum. That is an important part of the member's question.

The member also asked whether any consideration was given to the difference between rapidly growing areas, such as south west towns as against more stagnant areas. The answer is no and the reason for that answer is the committee made no indication that we should consider such differential. Notwithstanding that, Mr President, the Government is delighted to have been able to complete this issue. It has been gnawing away at many members in that every member of this place recognises just how unfair the outcomes were.

Mr President, I now have the official answer, but I have not signed it off yet.

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the House might want to read it and raise it later.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I will raise the rest of the question later.