

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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*Re: Milk Board*

May 27, 1937

Hon. Hodgdon C. Buzzell  
Belfast, Maine

Dear Brother Buzzell:

Mr. C.P. Osgood of the Department of Agriculture handed to me the correspondence he has had with you and Mr. Ephraim Littlefield, and asked me to reply to it.

I was in the Senate in 1935 when the Milk Control Board law was enacted, had something to do with its preparation and have acted as attorney for it since it commenced operations in April, 1935.

Belfast was one of the early markets set up by the Board and prices for both retail and wholesale milk were established, and have since been in effect. Belfast has been one of the markets in the State which has required very little oversight from the Board. Everything has been very quiet and peaceful as far as the Board knows until the attention of the Board was called to the policy recently put into effect by Mr. Littlefield and the Kittridge Store. It will be very apparent to you that price control cannot be maintained in any area unless all of the dealers and producers are willing to cooperate, and if any one storekeeper or producer is permitted to sell milk at a lower price than that fixed by the Board, the market cannot be kept in control and the Board will be obliged to withdraw from that area.

It seems very plain to me and to the Board that if Mr. Littlefield gives away a quart of milk to the purchaser of ten quarts who presents bottle caps, he is, in effect, giving a discount which is prohibited by the rules and regulations of the Board, and he is selling his milk at a less price than the Control one.

I understand that Mr. Littlefield is very much in favor of a controlled market, and that he and all the

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other dealers in Belfast, and the State for that matter, are convinced that if the control of the Board were removed the price of milk would rapidly decline to the same level as milk which is shipped out of the State to the Boston market.

I watched the operation of this Board for over two years and while, like yourself, my training and political beliefs are in general opposed to the theory of governmental control of prices and business, I am firmly convinced that the operation of this Board has been of great assistance to farmers and milk dealers; and that under it their revenue for the past two years has been many hundreds of thousands of dollars more than it would have been had there been no such Board.

I trust you will be willing to see Mr. Littlefield and convince him that the system he has adopted is contrary to the rules and regulations of the Board and very harmful to the continuation of control prices in the Belfast area.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Very truly yours,

Franz U. Burkett  
Attorney General

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