

explanation. That is why this amendment is moved, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order—as a matter of fact, probably two points of order, but I shall deal with them both at the same time. First of all, in view of the fact that this piece of legislation is before the House unexpectedly, I wonder if word has been communicated to members who are attending a meeting of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. I suspect that there may be some members attending that meeting who will be surprised and who would want to be here.

My second point of order concerns the proceedings for the rest of the day. I know, of course, that I could speak personally with the government House leader about what would take place after this, but I believe all hon. members are entitled to know what the order of business will be when we finish dealing with the farm credit legislation.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that information has gone to the committee advising members that this bill is now before the House. When this bill is cleared I shall call the Canada Labour Code.

Mr. Horner: I rise on the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is all very well to advise the committee on agriculture that this bill is being discussed, but there are amendments before the House on the bill which are the result of committee study. I think the government House leader (Mr. MacEachen) should either ask the agricultural committee to suspend its sitting while this bill is being discussed in the House, so that members can participate, or he should call the Canada Labour Code and stand this bill until tomorrow.

It was my understanding that the Canadian Wheat Board would appear before the committee for today only. I might add that it was the practice in the past to study the annual report of the Canadian Wheat Board each year, but today the committee must study four annual reports. I am not in any way linking the four annual reports to the term of office of the present government. I am sure it is not necessary to mention to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson), who knows the prominent part that the Canadian Wheat Board plays in the welfare of Canadian farmers generally, that he might use his good offices to ask that this bill stand so that the annual reports of the Canadian Wheat Board can be dealt with.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, the government whip has indicated to the chairman of the agricultural committee that this bill is now before the House. While I have no authority to suggest or demand that they suspend their hearings in order to attend in the House for the consideration of Bill C-5, I did suggest that they could consider suspending their sitting while these two amendments were being dealt with.

Mr. Horner: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, we were told this morning that the Wheat Board would stay today in Ottawa, meet with representatives of the other place tomorrow morning and then return to Winnipeg, I imagine tomorrow afternoon. If the committee proceedings this afternoon were suspended, I believe the four

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annual reports would not be adequately scrutinized. I do not think that the government House leader or the Minister of Agriculture would like to shoulder the responsibility for that important body not being fully examined, particularly when wheat, barley and oats are selling at the lowest price in history.

Mr. Knight: Mr. Speaker, may I say that I agree with the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) on this point, though I seldom do agree with him. The Wheat Board report was brought before the committee and we went only once around the table for a ten-minute discussion and three or four members did not have the opportunity to ask questions. Many of us wished to put further questions to the Wheat Board this afternoon.

As the hon. member for Crowfoot pointed out, this is the first opportunity we have to look at the four reports of the Canadian Wheat Board, a body which affects every farmer in western Canada. If we are to deal with this matter in the House at a time when the committee is sitting, we should consider whether we are limiting the very important discussion that should be going on in committee with the Canadian Wheat Board as well as the very important discussion that should be going on in this House on the Farm Credit Act.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, if the committee now in session wished to suspend its sittings, it could resume at five o'clock and make up the hour that would be taken of the hour and ten minutes from now until private members' hour, so both objectives could go forward at the same time without prejudice to the wheat farmer.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that we are getting into the area of diminishing returns because in the atmosphere which now prevails it is most unlikely that consent would be given to third reading of the farm credit bill today, and amendments which are not now being discussed as actively as they might be could be the subject of third reading amendments. The minister is well aware of this. The result would be the same. I am sure the minister, with that flare for compromise which marks his presence here today, would be quite prepared to agree to suspend these proceedings and go on with the Canada Labour Code.

Some hon. Members: Why not?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, we are not adamant about remaining on this item, but it was my understanding that we would move to it when we had completed third reading of the Family Income Security Plan. That possibility was removed by the failure of one member of the House to give unanimous consent—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On your side.

Mr. MacEachen:—and we were obliged to move to this item. I would be quite happy to call the Canada Labour Code, but hon. members opposite may not be ready to cope with it at the moment.

Some hon. Members: We are ready.