

S. O. 29

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, there have indeed been discussions among the Parties and I want to say that we appreciate the initiative taken by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Lewis) on this issue. I can say on behalf of all Members in this House of Commons from British Columbia that we appreciate the rather extraordinary gesture at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

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● (1150)

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 29

AGRICULTURE—CANADIAN GRAIN CRISIS

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 29 I rise to seek leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of considering a question of urgent and pressing necessity, that being the current crisis facing the Canadian grain farmer.

Last week the Canadian Wheat Board announced a reduction of the initial price of grain by 18 per cent. This is added to a 20 per cent reduction from last year and was exacerbated yesterday by the withdrawal of the moratorium on the Farm Credit Corporation. Many farmers now feel they need some assurance that the Government is willing to support them. I believe this is an urgent enough issue to be brought before the House for debate this day.

Mr. Speaker: I have, of course, received notice of the application of the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) and I find that it meets the requirements of the Standing Order. Does the Hon. Member have leave to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 29 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter?

Mr. Lewis: Prior to granting leave, if I may—

Mr. Speaker: The Chair may be in some difficulty here. The Chair has granted leave, the House has not. This is not a debatable matter, but I will hear the Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are naturally prepared to grant leave and I want to indicate that right off the bat. However, I want to make a couple of points.

First, all Members of the House look to decisions of the Chair with regard to deciding what truly constitutes an

emergency and to preparing requests for emergency debates in the future. The Government naturally governs itself accordingly.

Second, notice, either to the Minister involved or public notice, is helpful in enabling Ministers to organize their travel plans. As a result of public notice the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Masse) was here last evening. I will indicate now that it may not be possible for the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) to be here this evening because he has made travel plans.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I respect the decision of the Chair, although I must say that I personally disagree with it in view of the situation. I invite a comparison of my conduct and that of other government Members of Parliament with the conduct of opposition MPs on other occasions with respect to decisions by the Chair—leave granted.

Mr. Gauthier: We don't need sermons.

Mr. Lewis: Maybe you do.

Mr. Gauthier: Not from you.

Mr. Speaker: Under the Standing Orders this is not a debatable matter. Hon. Members will remember that when this Order was changed there was considerable thought put into it, resulting in the Order as it now stands. It is not debatable because the Hon. Members of this place who worked this Order out felt that that was not appropriate. Also the intention was expressed at the time that the Chair not give reasons for why it decided to accept an Order. The reason for that was that it was believed by Hon. Members that a body of jurisprudence, which would undoubtedly build up on these matters, would lead to a tendency for debate. As a consequence, the Order is as it is.

Having considered the matter and accepted the application the Chair is in the hands of the House. That is why, under the Orders, the Chair, having accepted it, then puts the question to the House.

The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary raises another matter, which is not a matter of slight importance at all, that is whether or not the appropriate Minister may be able to be in the House. However, with the greatest of respect, I believe that is a matter which Members will have to work out for themselves.

I think I am bound, as Speaker, to put the question. Does the Hon. Member have leave to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 29 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The proposed motion shall stand over until 8 p.m. this day.