

as I have tried to explain, it will surely create more confusion, frustration and misery than it should.

Mr. Elzinga: Mr. Speaker, with your consent, since only a few minutes are left to me to participate in the debate, I wonder if I could call it five o'clock and begin my speech after the dinner adjournment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House agreed that we call it five o'clock and proceed immediately to private members' business?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I have no objection to that provided I am assured that the members who are ordinarily expected to be here at five o'clock are here.

Mr. Kaplan: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the House might agree to continue for a few minutes after five o'clock to give the hon. member a chance to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Paproski: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think it is unfair to allow the hon. member to commence speaking at three minutes to five, because this will break up his speech. It would be simple courtesy on the part of the House to allow him to commence his speech at eight o'clock, particularly on a subject as important as metrication.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: To reassure hon. members, I might say that I have noticed the presence of the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Philbrook) who it has been suggested would be the government speaker. Does the House agree to proceed with private members' business at this time?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motions, private bills and public bills.

Mr. Paproski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe there has been agreement to allow all motions to stand, at the request of the government, and to commence with the debate on motion No. 46 standing in the name of the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. members have heard the suggestion of the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski), that we stand motions Nos. 1, 14, 35, 8, 23, 2, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 42, at the request of the government, and proceed to consideration of motion No. 46 in the name of the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers). Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Prairie Farm Assistance Act

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[English]

INVESTIGATION CONCERNING PRAIRIE FARM ASSISTANCE ACT ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer) moved:

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of the contents of the file or files in the possession of the Department of the Solicitor General and/or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police relating to the investigation concerning Prairie Farm Assistance Act administration.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this debate today came about as a result of the refusal of this government to state or reveal the facts of a serious matter which was first brought to the attention of this House by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) on December 9, 1974. Since then an interesting series of questions, evasive answers, an investigation and cover-ups has taken place. One could compare the actions of this government through more than one government department and the ministers to the behaviour of a child who broke a dish and hid the pieces in the hope the misdemeanour would not be known. In the case of the child, the broken dish was accidental. So far as the government is concerned, the evasion and cover-up were intentional. One can only assume there is guilt. Otherwise, why would the government treat the PFAA issue as one which is too hot to handle? We do not doubt that revelation of the facts would cause embarrassment to certain people and to the ministers who are supposed to be responsible.

● (1700)

When members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police visited my House of Commons office, at my request, to view the evidence I had in my possession—evidence of wrongdoing on the part of PFAA employees—they decided to check into it further. We had to prod the then solicitor general to order an investigation by that force. The RCMP officers deserve commendation for the thoroughness with which they delved into this affair, particularly in view of the political ramifications and the fact that they were directly responsible to the then solicitor general. These are dedicated men who are interested only in carrying out their duty, regardless of the difficulties they encounter. They did their job well. They were the only ones who could do the job unless the government established an official inquiry by an appointed commission, which up until now the government has refused to appoint.

I mentioned evasiveness and covering up by this government. This unfortunate and unacceptable administration within PFAA also caused three field inspectors to be asked to retire before their terms had terminated, and one individual who refused to retire was fired. He was fired, not because of incompetence or for just cause but because of the questionable policy of this government. That is an excellent example of the just society, which some people thought meant justice. Perhaps it is just in the eyes of the federal cabinet, just because it suits its purpose and hides its political manoeuvring at the expense