

Business of the House

As for the business of the house proposed to us, it was suggested that we should discuss first the resolution on farm improvement loans. We are quite prepared to help farmers, but we think that the first legislation to be discussed and the only one we should like to have added to the list of priority measures is the one concerning the establishment of a department of agriculture for the east. We believe that such legislation is most urgent and that the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) should add it to the priority legislation of the government.

We support the establishment of a department of agriculture for eastern Canada because even if farm loans are being improved, one must realize that there are practically no loans granted in eastern Canada, since this government's farm policy is conceived in terms of western rather than eastern farm needs.

Therefore, if that legislation is to be really useful, we think that to assist farmers the first thing would be to discuss and pass the legislation concerning the setting up of a department of agriculture for eastern Canada, in accordance with the resolution which has been on the order paper for almost two years, that is since the coming to office of this government.

As far as the flag issue is concerned, I must admit that I have been away for four weeks and 250 supposedly intelligent members discussed the question during that time. On my return, four weeks later, I find that nothing has been done. In fact, not only has nothing been done but the issue has been shelved, since it has been referred to a committee. Absolutely nothing has been done during my four weeks of absence.

You will agree that some Canadians must find it surprising, like I do, that no progress has been made in that field and that after two whole months—

[Text]

Mr. Rhéaume: We didn't miss you either.

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I have not been missed in the house but I can assure you that I did not miss the Conservative speeches on the flag issue.

Since the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) was allowed to digress, I should like to point out to the house that even in England—and one could hardly find a person more English than the English there—several people asked me: "That man called Baker—many of them did not even know

his full name—why does he take so much time to discuss the flag issue?"

The English themselves were surprised by the attitude taken in that connection and were wondering which hon. members were talking like that. They thought it was the French speaking members.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition was the first one to digress, since he was allowed to do so. However, I have completed my remarks on this matter.

Before resuming my seat, I should like to ask the Prime Minister if it would be possible to include the resolution on the establishment of a department of agriculture for eastern Canada on the list of priority measures?

[Text]

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, in order to clear up one point which may have led to some misunderstanding about the relation of the redistribution legislation to the transportation legislation, I said arrangements had been made on Friday for dealing with the rest of the day, that is Monday, in case the farm improvement loans legislation passed the resolution stage, namely that we would go on with the transportation legislation; and tomorrow, Tuesday, we would go back to other farm legislation, and if all the farm legislation passed tomorrow we would then go on to the redistribution measure.

Mr. Douglas: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am not objecting to that order of business. I simply point out that as recorded at page 7932 of *Hansard* for Friday last the Minister of Justice indicated that the transportation legislation would follow the farm improvement loans legislation.

Mr. Pickersgill: That is what we are doing.

[Later:]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that a week ago last Friday the Minister of Labour promised that the national labour code legislation would be on the order paper this month, and in view of the fact that the Prime Minister made no reference to it in his line-up of business, can he assure us that the labour code has priority along with the other items he mentioned today?