

HOUSE OF COMMONS

CANCELLATION OF ORGANIZATION MEETINGS
OF STANDING COMMITTEES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, through you I desire to direct a most important question to the President of the Privy Council. Since it is his day off from orders of the day I therefore direct my question to whoever can speak for the President of the Privy Council today, or to the Prime Minister. In view of the expressed desire of the Prime Minister that the standing committees be organized and assume responsibility, can whoever may now speak for the government inform members why this morning we were informed that by order of the President of the Privy Council all organization meetings of standing committees of this house called for next Tuesday have been cancelled? I know you realize the importance of this particular question, Mr. Speaker, and I hope you will allow an answer to be given.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps while the matter is being considered—

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): May I ask a supplementary question. While the cabinet is considering the answer, could we have this time deducted from the time allotted for questions?

AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF
ACREAGE PAYMENTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of serious financial losses of western farmers because of the loss of markets, frost, rain and low quotas, will the minister consider re-establishing the emergency legislation concerning acreage payments?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, there is a possible or a potential serious loss to the farmers of western Canada, but I think the hon. member will realize that until the harvest season is completed it would be difficult to ascertain what the loss will be. There are several days, perhaps even weeks, left this fall when much of this harvesting could be done, providing the weather turns better. I feel it would be premature, therefore, to give this kind of consideration when we don't know what the harvest will be. I should advise the hon.

Inquiries of the Ministry

member that the latest revised estimate by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics indicates the crop will be around 628 million bushels, which is a very good crop for western Canada.

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, is the government carrying on consultations with the provinces and other interested parties to consider measures to alleviate the serious income problem now facing the prairie farmers and also to counteract the deteriorating crop conditions which are getting worse by the day?

Mr. Olson: We are doing more than that, Mr. Speaker. We have introduced legislation to increase by 100 per cent the cash advances on farm stored grain in western Canada. We hope the house will be disposed to approve this measure quickly so we can make it available to the farmers.

Mr. Burton: Will the minister consider making representations to the house leader to give this legislation a higher priority on the list of house business?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I am wearing two hats today, one as Minister of Agriculture and the other one as acting house leader. We have already suggested, and I thank the Postmaster General for his agreement, calling this farm legislation for one more day, namely next Tuesday. We would be prepared to call Bill No. C-111 first, followed by Bill No. C-110, followed by Bill No. C-113, followed by Bill No. C-112. We should hope the house would give us authority to proceed with the provisions contained in those bills.

Mr. Southam: May I ask a supplementary question to my earlier question concerning cash advances? Does the minister not realize that the provisions concerning cash advances are going to limit the amount of money available to the small farmer because of a lack of quota?

Mr. Olson: I realize it is going to double the amount of money available for every type of grain, wheat, oats and barley. As soon as this legislation is approved, cash advances will be increased 100 per cent.

Mr. Burton: I have a supplementary question. Will the minister consider calling the bill concerning cash advances immediately after consideration has been completed of the Farm Improvement Loans Act?

Mr. Olson: Certainly the Farm Improvement Loans Act, the Farm Credit Corporation