

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

colleagues that the representations he is making are precisely those he would make when the estimates of this department are before the house as proposed by the minister. I should like to ask the hon. member to kindly confine his remarks to the question of the urgency of this debate at this time.

**Mr. Watson (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I do not feel I have had an opportunity to impress upon Your Honour and members of the house the real urgency of this matter. I should like to state that because we were led to believe last May that the price of wheat would go up, and because the price of wheat has actually gone down, the farmers of western Canada are facing a very urgent situation at this time. This is a matter which should be debated at the earliest possible moment.

I do not intend to take up any more of the time of the house, but I assure you that the members from western Canada will be anxiously awaiting a debate on this subject tomorrow.

**Mr. Ed. Schreyer (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, in view of my impression that you regard as reasonable the offer made by the house leader, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen), namely that this subject matter be discussed tomorrow during our consideration of the estimates of the Department of Trade and Commerce, I should like to say that I hope you are not of the opinion that there is no urgent need for debate at the earliest possible opportunity. The question of urgency does occur not only because of the magnitude of the matter, and this is very important, but also results from the limited time left before ratification of the wheat agreement negotiated last July and August in Rome, namely 14 days.

I might add that there would be no urgency of debate if in the past two weeks the government through its responsible minister had given some clear indication that it was prepared to take some special action regarding this matter. To assist Your Honour to gain some perspective of the urgency, let me point out that in the United States, where wheat production is of less importance to the economy than in Canada, the secretary of agriculture and his colleagues have convened emergency meetings, and the congress of that country has already enacted emergency legislation in respect of this particular matter.

Here in Canada we have had no such indication, only an admission that recent price levels in respect of wheat were "a bit soft". It is this kind of nonchalant treatment of a very

important matter that impels many of us here to demand that we debate this matter within 24 hours.

**Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words about this matter, though they do not necessarily relate to its urgency. It is my belief that if the suggestion proposed by the house leader today should be followed the whole purpose of this standing order will be placed in jeopardy. The minister's suggestion and his remarks were not related to the point of order. It is my belief that the order of the business of this house should be decided in some other way than on the basis of standing order 26.

The motion of the hon. member today was made under that standing order, and if this motion is to be decided on the basis of the suggestion of the minister, then standing order 26 will not serve its purpose. I suggest that Your Honour should not accept this suggestion in reaching your decision in respect of this motion under the standing order. If we follow this practice, similar to the practice followed yesterday, in deciding the order of the business of this house I suggest we will experience a great deal more disorder than we have experienced up to this time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Hon. members will have sensed that in the opinion of the Chair an alternative has been offered by the government, namely an opportunity to discuss the very urgent and important matter raised by this motion during the discussion of the estimates tomorrow. I do not suggest that the time offered is in keeping with the time hon. members of the opposition feel they should have, but in view of standing order 100(3) of Beauchesne's fourth edition I feel I have no alternative but to reject the motion at this time.

**ECONOMIC COUNCIL****REQUEST FOR TABLING AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOURTH REPORT**

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. Michael Starr (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In the past when an important committee has made a report to the government it has been normal practice to table that report so the distribution office could make copies available to members of the house almost immediately. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will table the fourth report of the Economic Council of Canada in order that the