

Commons Still Seeking More Efficient Methods For Conducting Business

OTTAWA (CP)—The House of Commons has been trying for several years to revise more efficient methods to conduct business and cut down the length of parliamentary sessions.

Most members agree that the number of sitting days has increased sharply since the end of the war due to antiquated rules of procedure coupled with a steady rise in the amount of sessional business. However, the various political groups have not been able to agree on what action should be taken.

This session a special committee has been meeting behind closed doors in an effort to find a common ground for revising the rules. It is as deadlocked as previous committees.

The committee is expected to make a report to the Commons sometime before the end of the session recommending rule changes. The government probably will not ask members to adopt the report because such action might result in the session continuing well into July.

LONG SESSION

The House now has been in session for 127 sitting days, a post-war record. Between Dec. 5, 1947, and June 30, 1949, Parliament sat for 119 days. The longest Second World War session lasted 136 days.

It is understood that a majority of the committee favors reducing the length of speeches to 30 from 40 minutes. The majority also proposes a limitation being placed on the length of time devoted to the

throne speech and the main debate on the budget.

Opposition parties object to these changes on grounds that they would interfere with freedom of speech in the Commons. The Opposition in the past has stated that more orderly presentation of legislation by the government would expedite business. It would be prepared to consider shorter speeches only after that had been achieved.

MINOR CHANGES

However, it is understood that a majority of the committee has reached agreement on a number of minor rule changes. These include quicker methods for answering questions placed on the order paper by private members and to deal with preliminary resolutions preceding the introduction of money bills.

The only concrete change which has taken place in the rules in recent years has been in the hours of sitting. At one time the Commons met at 3 p. m. during regular sitting hours and sat until 11 p. m. with a supper adjournment from 6 to 8 p. m. Regular hours now are from 2:30 to 10 p. m. with an adjournment from 6 to 8 p. m.

40 Nations Meet To Discuss World Wheat Surplus

By DONALD M. McNICOLL.

LONDON (AP)—Forty nations meet here this week to discuss the world glut of wheat and the slide in prices touched off by the Canadian and United States decision to top 10 cents a bushel off export prices.

Australia and Argentina are expected to cut their prices to keep in step.

If the slide isn't halted, the prediction here is that the world's wheat exporters will soon start a price war. At first glance, that should make big wheat importers such as Britain happy. But there is also the possibility that such a war could hurt world trade in other products.

Making this point, the independent, influential Manchester Guardian warned: "There is a risk of serious disturbance if the United States should try to ease the pressure on its bulging granaries by some form of dumping."

The reduced North American prices will save Britain an estimated \$14,000,000 in dollars a year, but the British treasury will have to step up its "deficiency" payments to home wheat growers, whose prices now fall in line with those for imported wheat.

NOT ATTENDING

Britain, the world's biggest wheat

and flour importer, will not attend next week's meeting as she is not a member of the International Wheat Council.

Despite strong pressure, the British refused last year to sign the International Wheat Agreement which aimed at a ceiling price of \$2.05 a bushel. The price now is as low as \$1.72.

British authorities now are priding themselves in refusing to sign the agreement. Some sources consider the refusal helped to bring prices down. Others contend prices would have come down in any event because of the huge surpluses in the four main exporting countries—Canada, the United States, Argentina and Australia.

Lord Beaverbrook's empire-thumping Daily Express predicted attempts will be made this week to persuade Britain to support "a fixed, artificial price" for wheat.

FIRM NO

"The answer to any request of that kind should be a firm and final no," the paper commented. "Britain should keep clear of all such price rings."

At the same time, there is a strong undercurrent of sympathy for Australian and Canadian wheat growers, who are regarded as members of the family who have struck a bad patch.

While the American farmer will suffer no loss of income since the U. S. administration supports prices, the Australian and Canadian grower has no such cushion.

And the British realize that, in consequence, Australia and Canada might be able to import fewer British products.

MEET WEDNESDAY

The wheat council meeting is scheduled to open Wednesday and continue until the following Wednesday, June 23.

Exporting countries are expected to ask why some importing countries which signed last year's agreement have failed to take up their agreed quota of wheat purchases.

According to Sir John Teasdale, chairman of the Australian wheat board, exporting countries have sold only fractions of their allotted quotas.

Some members of the British grain trade believe the wheat price will eventually fall to \$1.55 a bushel—the figure at which importing countries who signed the agreement are theoretically obligated to take up their full quotas.

French Lose Post To Reds Only 30 Miles From Hanoi

HANOI, Indo-China. (AP)—Viet-minh troops infiltrating the Red river delta forced the French Thursday to abandon a post only 30 miles from Hanoi, overwhelmed a Viet Namee strong point in the Phat Diem sector and attacked a string of other Viet Namee posts.

More than 100,000 rebels who have infiltrated the delta are stepping up their assault while the main Viet-minh units tighten their lines threatening the delta's outer defences on the west, north, and south. The French are pulling out of thinly-manned posts not considered essential for defending key towns and the rail-highway route over which supplies move from the port of Haiphong to Hanoi.

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