

Adjournment Debate

now have an ice patrol and every ship is equipped with radar. We could extend the season by one month and thus increase the amount of grain going out of the port by at least 10 per cent per annum over the next five years in order to reach the 50 million bushel mark.

The minister has now decided to have another study carried out with regard to grain movement, called the grain transportation study. I wonder if it is not just a way of slowing things down and taking the pressure off the minister. I would also like to know why we really need this report. I would also like to know to whom the terms of reference are extended and who was invited to bid on this study. It is my understanding that some of the people who were invited to bid are in the international world of transportation. Also I notice that the Rod Bryden report on grain handling in the prairies went beyond its terms of reference and included the port of Churchill. Bryden wrote a devastating report against the port of Churchill and its transportation facilities, and it would now appear that he is getting all the creamy jobs from the Department of Transport.

I should like to see the facilities at Churchill used to their maximum capacity and at least 50 million bushels of grain shipped out of there annually.

Mr. W. Kenneth Robinson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Smith) has once again brought before the House a matter which is of continuing concern, particularly with reference to the openness of the port. There are some 100 days or less when port facilities are open for grain movement purposes. I hope that this year the port will be used to its maximum potential and I am assured that we can expect a third record year.

The hon. member also brought forth a number of other questions which were not contained in his original question. I hope these questions can be answered at a later date.

I would like to assure the House that every effort will be made to again use the port of Churchill to the maximum extent for the third year in a row. There is currently pressure on all parts of the transportation system to move the grain that has been sold this crop year. However, Churchill will most likely find itself again in the advantageous position of experiencing its greatest demand on the transportation system

late in the crop year after the tight situation elsewhere has eased. The Churchill season from July to October normally requires boxcars after the system has had time to recover from the delays which often occur during the winter. This situation can be expected to occur again this year.

● (2227)

The government is committed to maximizing the use of the port of Churchill. In our current rehabilitation program for prairie rail lines, \$1,610,000 has been allotted by the federal government to improve the rail line into Churchill. The work to be undertaken involves bank widening and drainage, rail relay and extending the sidings along the line. These improvements are expected to double the capacity of the port.

The grain transportation situation is under constant review by the government. Continually we are searching for ways to improve efficiency in the utilization of present facilities. Examples of the benefits of this study abound. The most obvious example of the improvements which have been made is the fact that car turnaround time for grains moving to export position has been reduced to 17 or 18 days from the 22.9 days determined by the Hall commission report one year ago. The government will continue to analyse the system looking for new ways of improving its operation, with a view to providing adequate facilities to moving to market the increasing production which is expected in the next few years.

Recently the government has announced an intensive investigation of the operating procedures used by the railroads, grain handling companies and the Canadian Wheat Board, as they work together moving Canada's grain production to market. This project is expected to provide additional recommendations which will further improve the utilization of the railroad facilities currently available.

Through its purchase of 8,000 hopper cars and its commitment to a \$700 million rehabilitation program, the government has shown a willingness to step in and provide the necessary transportation facilities when warranted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until two o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

At 10.28 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.