

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Winters: I believe the hon. member is fully familiar with the reasons leading up to the decision to suspend the one-sixth. I can only say that when the decision is made to restore it, an announcement will be made at that time.

MINES AND TECHNICAL SURVEYS**PAYMENTS BY DEPARTMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL AND SPECIAL SERVICES**

Hon. George Prudham (Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys): Mr. Speaker, on May 8 the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) referred to the answer I gave on May 7 to his request for information concerning the total amount paid by the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys for professional and special services in the fiscal year 1950-51.

The answer that was given is correct. It indicates the actual expenditure made in 1950-51 according to the basis of account classification used by the department in that year. However, as members realize, on the recommendation of the public accounts committee and the Auditor General, the form of presentation of the estimates was materially changed for 1951-52. This has resulted in a considerable change in our department in the method used to classify expenditures. In order to provide a basis for comparison with this year's estimates, last year's accounts have been reconstructed in the same manner for purposes of comparison only.

PRIVATE BILL**FIRST READING—SENATE BILL**

Bill No. 267, to incorporate the Scripture Gift Mission (Canada) Incorporated.—Mr. Fleming.

FREIGHT RATES**QUESTION AS TO LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR EQUALIZATION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. R. Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. Has the minister's attention been drawn to a dispatch in this morning's press regarding legislation for the equalization of freight rates? Can the minister say when such legislation will be introduced, and will it include the recommended \$7 million subsidy for the maintenance of the rail link between east and west?

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Minister of Transport): I have not seen the dispatch in this morning's press. All I can tell the hon. member is that the legislation to which he refers

[Mr. Fleming.]

is still under consideration. When it is finalized, it will be placed on the order paper.

Mr. Argue: During the present session?

Mr. Chevrier: I hope so.

RAILWAYS**ALLOCATION OF BOX CARS FOR MOVEMENT OF WESTERN GRAIN**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. A. Ross (Souris): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport, with respect to the present shortage of box cars for the movement of grain in the prairie provinces. I should like to be permitted to quote one of several telegrams received today, and this one is from Reeve R. A. Patterson, of Boissevain, Manitoba. It is very significant. It says:

Cars for grain urgently needed in this municipality; this covers station of Boissevain, Ninga, Croll and Regent. Approximately, by estimate of elevator agents at Boissevain alone, 145,000 bushels on farms to come to Boissevain, besides approximately 200,000 in elevators. Grain must be moved to make room for new crop and to help farmers to finance this year's operations. Considerable of this grain is tough; need over fifteen cars a week to clear Boissevain alone by July 31.

An answer to a question in my name which appears on page 2607 of *Hansard* for May 2 sets forth the problem facing the three prairie provinces by estimating the amount of grain still held in country elevators. This is a very serious matter.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Minister of Transport): The hon. member sent me a copy of a telegram which he had received from Mr. Patterson, the reeve of a municipality in western Canada. The copy was in his own handwriting, and I am sorry to say it was rather difficult to read. I believe I should add that many other members in the house are receiving similar telegrams, and if I were required to answer them on the orders of the day I suppose we would have to deal with any number of questions. I know that the position is urgent. I can tell the hon. member that it is the responsibility of the wheat board to direct the movement of box cars to the municipalities. The best I can tell the hon. member is that I shall be glad to bring to the attention of the wheat board the representations made by the reeve of this municipality.

The general position concerning box cars is exceedingly better than it was when I made a statement some ten days ago. In fact, the unfavourable balance is now down to 3,176, which is a decrease of 4,300 cars in less than three weeks. At the time I made my statement in the house on April 25, I