

Inquiries of the Ministry

for the delivery of barley suitable for malting, and there is a supplementary oats quota of 12 bushels per seeded acre. Recently delivery quotas have been raised above the five bushels per specified acre level at a number of individual points.

With the excellent movement of grain from the Pacific coast ports this year, the five bushel quota has generally been provided for in the province of Alberta. In Saskatchewan, and to a lesser extent in Manitoba, additional shipments are required before the general five bushel quota can be implemented. The wheat board is acutely conscious of this problem and is working on a shipping policy designed to relieve congested points in Manitoba and Saskatchewan just as soon as physically possible. I might add, however, that there is one difficulty which cannot be underestimated. With only limited storage space throughout Canada, it is essential that only kinds of grain and grades of grain which are in demand can be moved to forward positions and this factor has and will continue to slow down the movement of grain from many areas in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. For example, the board has ample stocks of No. 2 northern wheat in eastern positions at the present time and any No. 2 northern wheat which is moved forward to terminal points must, for the time being at least, be treated as grain for storage. I might add that this problem is receiving the continuous attention of the board.

Since the turn of the year space has been appearing at some delivery points, particularly in Alberta. In order to make use of this space, the board commenced on March 17 to increase delivery quotas beyond the five bushel level. The increases have been in terms of either one or two bushels per specified acre dependent upon space available at the delivery points concerned. As soon as the quotas are increased above the five bushel level at individual points, these stations are cut off from further shipments except for shipments specially authorized by the board. This will have the effect of increasing car supply to areas of greatest need. At the present time delivery quotas have been increased above the five bushel level at slightly over 200 delivery points.

The question before us requests an estimate of delivery prospects for the balance of the crop year. This is a very difficult type of estimate to make because the quantity of grain which producers will be able to market in the prairie provinces between now and the end of the crop year depends almost entirely upon the volume of domestic and export sales, and generally the buying of grain today is on a hand to mouth basis.

Therefore the delivery possibilities for the balance of the crop year will depend to a large extent upon day to day selling on the part of the wheat board. We know of course that there are quantities of grain which will leave Canada shortly after the opening of navigation. We have confidence that there will be worth-while buying of Canadian grain over the period of the next four months.

I would hazard a guess that in the crop year 1953-54 producers in the prairie provinces will market somewhere around 600 million bushels of grain which will be well above normal marketings based upon normal crops. If we attain this figure of marketing in 1953-54, the total volume of grain marketed from the bumper crops of 1951, 1952 and 1953 will amount to nearly 2,200 million bushels. This is a very large record of marketings over a period of thirty-six months.

Mr. Argue: With respect to the marketing prospects for this year, does the minister think that the quota of seven bushels, wherever it is in effect, may be increased before the end of the crop year, or is the target to get everyone up to a quota of seven bushels only by the end of the crop year?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Seven bushels per acre, based on the specified acreage, is a very large quantity of grain indeed, almost the entire crop of last year. I would say that if we are successful in getting deliveries up to the seven bushel quota per specified acre everyone should be quite happy.

Mr. Argue: Does the minister realize that in many areas seven bushels per cultivated acre is less than half of the crop produced last year?

Mr. Harkness: Can the minister give us a breakdown of the 410 million bushels as to how much of it is wheat, how much oats and how much barley?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I could obtain that information. It will take time, but if my hon. friend wishes to have the question answered later I will be glad to bring down an answer.

[Later:]

Mr. Diefenbaker: I wish to ask the Minister of Trade and Commerce a supplementary question based on the estimate that he has now made. Having regard to the potential sales domestically and in foreign markets of Canadian wheat, what is his estimate of the number of bushels of wheat that will be in farm storage at the time the harvesting of the 1954 crop commences?