

*The Address—Mr. Argue*

statistics weekly published by the dominion bureau of statistics, that on October 25 of this year there were on hand in all Canadian positions over 220 million bushels of wheat compared to something over 191 million bushels on the same date of the preceding year.

Not only has there been an increase in the amount of grain in storage at terminals, country elevators and other points but the bulk of the grain in storage is No. 5, No. 6 and feed wheat. As a result there is a real marketing problem. The very severe shortage of box cars in western Canada has been raised in this house already a number of times. Insufficient box cars are available and more elevators are becoming plugged week by week. I have here the latest map of congested pool elevator points in the province of Saskatchewan. Looking at it one can see quite readily that points on the C.P.R. lines are in a much worse position than points on the C.N.R. lines. I suggest to the government, and to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier) particularly, that they should take a hand directly in this situation and make certain that the C.P.R. allots a greater number of box cars, especially to points on their branch lines, so that the congestion may be alleviated. In replying to a supplementary question put by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) on October 30 with respect to the number of congested elevator points in Saskatchewan, the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) had this to say, as recorded at page 512 of *Hansard*:

I must say that I have not received that wire. I did receive a letter from George Robertson, the secretary, signed by his own hand, as we say in the house, which mentioned the congested points. I did not count them, but if there were one hundred I would be greatly surprised.

That followed a statement by the member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) that there were 528 pool elevator points in Saskatchewan congested on that date. In my hand I have a report of the Saskatchewan wheat pool as it appeared in the *Leader-Post* of November 1. The first paragraph of that report reads as follows:

In our message to the Minister of Trade and Commerce under date of October 19 the minister was advised that as at that date 528 pool country elevators out of a total of 1,165 elevators are plugged for all practical purposes and cannot take in grain as offered.

The wheat pool had indicated to the Minister of Trade and Commerce on October 19 that there were 528 pool elevator points in Saskatchewan plugged, yet on October 30 the Minister of Trade and Commerce gets up in the house and says that so far as he knows there were less than 100 elevator points in

Saskatchewan that were plugged. The Minister of Trade and Commerce should get his facts straight, and should realize that this is a deplorable situation. Unless something is done, great hardship will be suffered by the people of Saskatchewan. The situation is not getting any better.

In a further report a week later the Saskatchewan wheat pool said that instead of 528 wheat pool elevator points being plugged, there were then 663 pool elevator points in Saskatchewan that were unable to take grain as offered for sale. Once again I ask the government to take a hand in the situation, and to see that more box cars are made available for the disposal of grain in Saskatchewan. When the farmers are unable to market their grain, then some steps must be taken in order to provide the farmers with sufficient cash to pay their store bills and to meet their family living costs for the winter. In a question to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) I asked that consideration be given to the suggestion that a 75 per cent advance payment be made on farm-stored grain. The Prime Minister stated that the matter is under consideration, but an official decision has not been reached yet.

I want to point out to the government that an advance payment equal to 75 per cent of the initial price on farm-stored grain is not a political question. In a letter to the government the premier of Saskatchewan made that request. I see by the *Leader-Post* that the leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal party, Mr. Walter Tucker, favours such a program. Farm organizations are calling upon the government to make an advance payment on farm-stored grain. I feel that, in a situation such as this, the government should act speedily to assist our farmers. At this session I have placed on the order paper a bill to provide for payment of storage on farm-stored grain. Under the present wheat board act the Canadian wheat board has authority to make a payment on farm-stored grain if directed to do so by regulation. The bill I have proposed would make it mandatory on the Canadian wheat board to make a payment on farm-stored grain. I believe it is only fair that the farmers should receive the same payment on farm-stored grain as that received by the elevator companies. Why should a farmer have to go to the expense of building and repairing granaries every year and receive no storage payment, when the elevator companies at the local points spend large sums of money building annexes in order to receive a payment of one-thirtieth of a cent per bushel per day from the wheat board for the grain stored in those annexes?