

Inquiries of the Ministry

being for wheat of those grades, so that the loss will not fall as heavily as otherwise on the farmer?

The third question is this. In many of these areas the elevators are plugged. In those areas will the minister consider giving the farmers an opportunity to load their wheat on cars on the loading platform instead of the wheat having to go through the elevators, which is now the rule generally adopted on the prairies? I ask these questions in order to clarify the situation for many western farmers and rural municipalities that are asking for information.

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, the first question refers to localities where all the elevators are plugged with wheat. I may say that that situation is being relieved rapidly. Car loadings from country elevators are now running at their peak of the season and we are able to make the loading more selective. In the past the difficulty has been that we have not been able to move forward low grade wheat. At the moment we are able to move a reasonable quantity of that wheat. Sales of low grade wheat have been substantial in recent weeks and we find that we need more low grade wheat at Fort William for movement east. That situation will be relieved shortly, I believe. While there are a good many individual elevators plugged, there are not so many elevator points that are plugged. There is a distinction. The pool elevators handle a greater proportion of the grain at most points than do private elevators, and it is not possible in all cases to keep individual elevators clear. We are doing our best to permit all elevators to handle the wheat that is offered. I think that before long we will have all points relieved so that wheat that has been threshed and coarse grains that are deliverable can be delivered.

My hon. friend referred to damp wheat. We have not yet been able to move forward damp wheat. My hon. friend knows that it cannot be stored in country elevators with safety, but we hope within a matter of two or perhaps three weeks the wheat board will be able to give a complete preference to damp wheat.

Mr. Diefenbaker: And tough.

Mr. Howe: And tough, which will be loaded into cars and sent to the lakehead for drying. That will be the next objective of the wheat board.

My hon. friend will see why damp wheat cannot be handled when the rush is on, because many of these cars require special bins at the lakehead; but we do expect to be

able to give a complete preference to damp and tough grain, particularly damp, within the next two or three weeks. As far as grain over loading platforms is concerned, I think any producer can deliver over a loading platform if he can get the cars. To my mind that is not a solution. We hope to be able to make it possible to load through the elevators, which is the best way for the producer and all concerned.

Mr. Diefenbaker: But where elevators are filled in a marketing point, would consideration be given there?

Mr. Howe: I think it would be more efficient to use the car supply to unplug the elevators than to use the car supply to load over platforms. My hon. friend knows that loading over platforms is a slow process. I think we can achieve the same objective more quickly by supplying cars through the country elevators at the loading point.

INQUIRY AS TO ADVANCE PAYMENT ON FARM STORED GRAIN—INTERIM PAYMENT FOR 1951 CROP—FINAL PAYMENT ON 1950 POOL

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. R. Argue (Assiniboia): I have two questions along the same line that I should like to direct to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. My first question is based on the latest report from the *Western Producer* of an increased number of congested pool elevators. My question is: Has a final decision been made on the request for a 75 per cent advance payment on farm stored grain? My second question is: Will the government grant the request of the United Grain Growers and other farm organizations that an interim payment on deliveries of the 1951 crop of wheat, oats and barley be made at an early date?

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): The problem of western Canada is not the problem of farm stored grain particularly. We hope shortly to have elevator points relieved. If country elevators are not relieved now they will be relieved shortly so that farm stored grain can be delivered. That of course is the desirable arrangement as far as the government is concerned, and I think as far as the producer is concerned.

I have stated before that the government is actively considering the problem of wheat, oats and barley that are still in the fields. Representatives of the Department of Trade and Commerce and the Canadian wheat board are in western Canada at the present time exploring the situation with the wheat pools and with elevator companies, and I hope very shortly to be able to announce a method of financing wheat that could not