

Department of Transport Act

the box car census, they will find that at August 15, 1955—the nearest date to the beginning of the crop year—the total number of box cars in the prairie and Pacific regions was close to 45,000 cars. In round figures that is about 5,000 cars less than in the preceding year, as of August 15, 1954 and about 10,000 cars less than the box car population as of August 15, 1953.

Hon. members have spoken about the present situation and have asked whether there was in fact a shortage of box cars to move the grain crop. I do not want to take up too much of the time of the committee, but I might say that the question was discussed when the C.N.R. accounts were before the standing committee on railways and shipping owned by the government. I think that Mr. Gordon's evidence on that subject merits reading and consideration. I shall merely summarize it by pointing out that he emphasizes the point that the question of whether there is a shortage at any given time depends on the volume of traffic to be moved and on the way and time in which you wish to move it. I will not attempt to read his evidence which is rather lengthy. However, I think that hon. members will find it informative and constructive. But, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that perhaps one of the most interesting demonstrations of the fact that our box cars are sufficient to move the grain crop can be had by looking back at what happened in earlier years. In 1952-53, for example, the total export shipments of wheat and other grains amounted to something more than 400 million bushels. I suggest, to start with, that the box car population in 1952-53 was less than it was in 1955-56. When we look again at the figures for the crop year 1953-54, when exports amounted to nearly 265 million bushels, I suggest that there again the box car population was sufficient to move the wheat that Canada was able to export in that year. I think also that when hon. gentlemen opposite will have the opportunity to study the figures—I am not suggesting that it is an immediate one but when the figures for the current crop year are written—and when consideration is given to the climatic conditions which have had to be met by the railways in this past winter, I think they will find that what has been done by the railways and what has been done by the transport controller will merit general commendation.

Mr. Castleden: I wonder whether the minister will permit a question?

Mr. Marler: Yes.

Mr. Castleden: I was wondering whether, perhaps before continuing his statement tomorrow, he could find out, since the number

of cars in the prairie regions was greater in 1955 than it was in 1954, why it was that the—

Mr. Marler: I did not say that.

Mr. Castleden: I understood the minister to say that.

Mr. Marler: No.

Mr. Castleden: Did you say there were 5,000 cars less?

Mr. Marler: I said there were 5,000 cars less in 1955 than there were in 1954.

Mr. Castleden: And 10,000 less than in 1953?

Mr. Marler: Approximately 10,000; not exactly 10,000 but approximately that number.

Mr. Castleden: In about the first six months car loadings, as far as farm deliveries are concerned, were almost 100 million bushels down.

Mr. Marler: Mr. Chairman, let us talk about the same thing at the same time.

Mr. Argue: Ten o'clock.

Mr. Marler: I do not see how we can talk about the box car population and at the same time talk about car loadings; and I do not see how, when we are talking about the number of box cars, we can then proceed to talk about hundreds of millions of bushels of wheat.

Mr. Argue: Ten o'clock.

Mr. Marler: I think it would be wiser if we talked about the same thing. Perhaps if the hon. gentleman would allow me to do so, I might finish the statement tomorrow. Then if I have not answered all of the questions I shall try to do so.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Progress reported.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, we shall continue with this debate tomorrow. Then we shall take the resolution with respect to the Northwest Territories Power Commission Act; then the resolution with respect to the judges; then the two motions in the name of the hon. member for Yorkton (Mr. Castleden) with respect to certain papers that he wishes tabled; then the resolution standing in my name with respect to the Veterans' Business and Professional Loans Act; and then that in the name of the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys (Mr. Prudham).

At ten o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.