

Department of Transport Act

a study made on March 1 by the Saskatchewan wheat pool or by competent people representing that organization:

At half the shipping points in Saskatchewan,—

This is on Feb. 22, of this year.

—farmers were still restricted to one bushel per acre delivery quota . . . This meant that the grain income for most half-section farmers at these points since last August had a ceiling of \$720.

Then he goes on to point out the position of farmers farming larger portions of land.

At the same date, 612 points were on a quota of one bushel to the specified acre. (There are 1,107 shipping points in the province).

I go back to the preceding paragraph:

On February 22, 32 Saskatchewan shipping points were still on the unit quota of delivery.

They had not even been allowed to load out their first bushel in the current crop year.

The railways had loaded about 26,800 fewer box cars at prairie points during the present crop year than during the same portion of the 1954-55 crop year.

Apparent available space in terminal elevators at the lakehead on February 15 was about 20 million bushels.

We know that that capacity has been substantially increased since that time. They go on to say this:

The review also showed that congestion was much more serious in the southern half of the province than in the northern. In six wheat pool divisions south of a line from Yorkton to Alask, 65 per cent of the shipping points were still on the 1-bushel quota as compared with 58 per cent for the province as a whole.

The Canadian wheat board had issued several thousand shipping orders to country elevators for the movement of grain which had been unfilled because cars had not been spotted at the elevators. The Saskatchewan wheat pool itself had more than 6,000 orders for grain shipments on hand awaiting the arrival of box cars.

Thus we see, Mr. Chairman, that the situation is indeed critical with respect to the movement and delivery of grain.

A few moments ago the hon. member for Brandon quoted some revealing figures relative to the number of box cars that will be needed between now and July 31 of this year, which is the end of the present crop year, if we are to be able to deliver as much grain this year as we delivered last year. While I am not going to place on record that comprehensive statement that he made, although I have it here, I should like to point out, as he did, that it will require some 1,085 box cars to be loaded every day until July 31 if we are to be able to deliver as much grain this year as we did last year.

I think the figure he quoted was that the total number of bushels of all grains delivered last year amounted to some 514.7 million bushels. That, of course, includes wheat,

oats, rye, barley and flax. Up until February 1 of this year we had delivered a total of 199 million bushels. I believe it would be correct to say that the latest figures we have of deliveries up until April 4 are something in the neighbourhood of 255 million bushels as against the figure of 199 million bushels that I quoted for February 1. The fact remains that it is going to take even more box cars from now until the completion of this crop year if we are going to be able to dispose of as much grain as we did last year. Therefore, I hope that when this new man is appointed his work will be reflected in a more orderly and a more realistic allocation of box cars in so far as the movement of grain and grain products is concerned, especially from western Canada, where we are in such a critical position at the present time.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall the resolution carry?

Mr. Castleden: In speaking in support of the resolution preceding the bill to amend the act to continue the life of the transport controller for some years, I should like to say that the present business demands in the transportation field require that such a man should hold such a position. The matter of the transportation of grain from the western prairies has become a very vital one to the producers in that part of the country, particularly in a year such as 1955-56 when, because of the lack of facilities and the lack of space, a large section of the population in the prairie regions was in a sort of semi-recession as a result of having the source of the life blood of their business cut off. They could not deliver their grain. When that is brought about because of a lack of transportation facilities it is something which requires the attention of the government particularly. The increased production in the past number of years in western Canada has placed a strain on that part of the country in so far as the farmers getting returns for their produce is concerned. The situation has become complicated over the years because the western farmers have been struggling in the best way they knew how for years to get out of the clutches of what was previously the Winnipeg grain exchange. They have been fighting for years to get away from the line elevator companies who operated the Winnipeg grain exchange and had complete control. The farmer was compelled to sell to them pretty well at the price which they were able to manipulate in the grain exchange. They held the grain and then sold it on the world's markets at the world price and pocketed the difference.