

actually can move out of the country during the course of a year. That, of course, happens to be the total of the 1977 crop available for export, plus 150 million bushels out of that which was available from 1976. Our objective, however, is to continue to encourage production and farming techniques which result in it. The increased storage in Vancouver which is now under construction will be a major help, as will the very important facilities which we expect to see under construction in Prince Rupert within a few months.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, in view of the likelihood—or it may be a fact—that China will require additional grain and may look to the United States for that rather than to Canada, has the minister received requests or urgings from the Canadian Wheat Board and others reminding him that 2,000 boxcars went out of service this year and that they are requesting 4,000 more hopper cars and funds for the refurbishing of 5,000 boxcars in order to keep up with the grain movement we would like to have for grain sales to China?

The second part of my question, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will realize that there were three parts to his first question. He is now on the second part of his second question, which really calls for some leniency.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I was trying to avoid asking for a second supplementary. Will the minister shorten the time-frame for the enlargement of storage facilities at Prince Rupert and allow for the use of the present capacity? We could double grain movement, with the present capacity at Prince Rupert, in order to enlarge shipments to places like China.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I assure the hon. member that we are looking at all alternatives including, of course, improvements to the existing terminal at Prince Rupert which we announced and which will be under way. We are looking at the question of the need for additional hopper cars. We have been very alert to that problem, and we furnished the first 8,000 hopper cars to move our grain.

We also have been prepared to look at every available facility, including bulk handling facilities on the west coast, and I am fairly satisfied that we can move our export capability up by another 50 million bushels, even with existing facilities but, clearly, we are looking to the future and will want to go even 100 million bushels over that figure.

EFFECT OF DEVALUED DOLLAR ON GRAIN SALES

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a supplementary question to the same minister. In view of the fact that forward sales of Canadian wheat were based on the \$1.03 dollar and our dollar is now down to 88 cents, which means a direct loss of 15 per cent to the wheat

producers, I wonder when the minister will be able to say that future sales will be based on the 88-cent dollar.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is exactly wrong in his conclusions. Most of the sales of wheat are, indeed, priced in U.S. dollar terms, so that the 15 per cent change in the value of our dollar has produced an increase of 15 per cent, measured in Canadian dollar terms, to Canadian farmers. So they are far better off in the current circumstances.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

FISHERIES

REOPENING OF SWORDFISHING INDUSTRY

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. Judge Winston Arrow, of the United States district court in Pensacola, Florida, recently ruled in favour of a group of American swordfishermen who were charged with distributing swordfish which were supposed to contain excessive amounts of mercury, since under test the fish proved to contain less than one part per million of mercury.

Since the American food and drug directorate set the level of acceptable mercury in swordfish at five parts per million in 1969, has the minister made representations recently to Washington concerning the possibility of reopening the Canadian swordfishing industry, now it is evident that mercury levels in these fish are not harmful; and, if so, what was the result?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I know that conversations were held several weeks ago and I understand that they are going to continue. I will report to the hon. member.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

SCHEDULE FOR IMPROVING GRAIN HANDLING FACILITIES AT PRINCE RUPERT

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a short question for the Minister of Transport, who is also responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. He made reference a few moments ago to improvement of the port facilities at Prince Rupert. He said it would be a matter of months before that port would be capable of meeting its grain handling potential.

Can the minister tell the House what firm commitments have been made and what the construction schedule is? Is he