

**Mr. Clark:** I wonder if the Minister of Finance could make a radical change in the way he has approached his responsibilities and begin to approach them seriously and tell the House of Commons and the country, which is very much concerned about the uncertainty that has been caused by the mismanagement of economic events, when there will be a budget.

Will he tell us whether a date has been decided, will he tell us whether he will keep his word as to a mid-November budget, and will he tell the House of Commons and the people of Canada when a budget will be presented to this parliament?

**Mr. Chrétien:** I think the hon. member is getting a little excited. Yesterday I rose in my seat and said I would give an answer tomorrow or the day after. I am sure he could be patient for 24 hours. I said I would give the date on that day or the following day. I am not giving the date at this moment, and I have until tomorrow to keep my word. I usually keep it.

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## TRANSPORT

### MOVEMENT OF GRAIN TO EXPORT POSITIONS

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board arising out of events that have occurred over the last while and questions asked earlier today.

In view of the fact that the People's Republic of China was in the market for six million to seven million tons of grain, and that the Canadian Wheat Board signed a contract effective September 1 for three million tons, not because that was all China wanted but because that was all the Canadian Wheat Board was capable of delivering, and in view of the fact that Canadian Pacific, with a record profit of \$233 million, refused to repair boxcars to increase our grain movement capability, I should like to ask the minister what measures he intends to take to require, first, the railroads to repair and return at least 5,000 railway-owned boxcars to the grain movement and, second, to co-ordinate rail and marine shipping so that the Wheat Board can bid and secure contracts in greater amounts than they have been able to because of this lack of capability.

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport and Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member will be interested to know that I have not really accepted a final negative from Canadian Pacific on the repair of boxcars. They did indicate they were satisfied that they could move their share of a 23 million bushel movement of export grain. I am a little doubtful about that, so I pressed them again to take up our offer to pay half the cost of repairing 1,000 boxcars.

Of course, we are constantly looking at ways of improving the movement of grain, and a consultant studying the situation might well help in that regard. The one difficulty we still have is in regard to shipping which is essentially under an international regime rather than under our own. A few years ago, the Canadian Wheat Board considered, through an expert committee, whether it should change its system of marketing to

improve the shipping as well as the provisions of grain. They might have to look at that once again at this time in the context of the difficulties of ensuring that shipments arrive when they should.

### GRAIN NOT BEING MOVED IN WESTERN CANADA

**Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the same minister. Notwithstanding the statements which the minister made in reply to the hon. member for Vegreville and the hon. member for Moose Jaw, grain is piling up in western Canada on farms and in elevators—a \$500 million loss which farmers experienced last year because of the inability to move the grain.

Can the minister tell the House what time we are talking about with regard to the recent floods and wash-outs of the railway lines affecting shipments of grain to Prince Rupert, and whether he has any alternative in mind?

● (1502)

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport and Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, there are no easy solutions to the problems which arise from strikes, landslides or wash-outs when one is trying to move a maximum amount of grain. Again to put the matter into context, I wish the hon. member would not exaggerate. When he said that there was a loss of \$500 million worth of grain shipments, he simply misstated the situation entirely. Last year the producers delivered over one billion bushels of grain for the first time in history.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lang:** Even though we had an all-time record crop on our hands, we moved the whole of that crop plus a little more. The question is, how much more than that can we move in any given year, and our answer is that we want to be able to move a couple of million tons or another 50 million bushels more than that. That is what we are trying to do.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Yesterday the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) gave me notice of a question of privilege which he said he would proceed with when he and the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) were next in the House.

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## PRIVILEGE

### MR. BREWIN—CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM SOLICITOR GENERAL

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of raising a question of privilege. If Your Honour rules that there is a prima facie case, I will move the question of whether or not the letter from the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) to me, dated October 27, 1978, is misleading and should be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.