

WHEAT

AMENDMENT OF REGULATIONS RESPECTING
DELIVERY QUOTAS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. F. DONNELLY (Wood Mountain): Some time ago the Minister of Trade and Commerce announced in the house that he expected to increase the quota for western wheat to eighteen bushels to the acre. When does he expect to do it?

Hon. J. A. MacKINNON (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Before coming into the house I received word that the raising of the quota from fourteen to eighteen bushels is going into effect as from to-day. That does not mean that the quota will be raised from fourteen to eighteen bushels at all points, but at those points where it is possible to raise it.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Will cars be made available for taking out the fourteen-bushel quota before the moving of this new seventeen-bushel quota?

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): The matter of handling grain quotas is being dealt with from the point of view of the needs of the individual community. I cannot answer yes or no to this question, but cars are handled on the basis of placing them at those points where it is impossible to deliver the established quota.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

UNEMPLOYMENT IN ALBERTA COAL MINING AREAS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. C. E. JOHNSTON (Bow River): Last Tuesday I raised a question in regard to the unemployment situation in the west. Would the minister care to reply to-day?

Hon. HUMPHREY MITCHELL (Minister of Labour): I can do that. My hon. friend will appreciate that the time ran out at eleven o'clock when the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Hansell) concluded his statement. The situation with regard to the coal industry in the west was brought to the attention of the house. It is quite true that we have had a difficult problem in the west, brought about largely by the unusual weather conditions prevailing on the prairies this past winter. I think that might be said generally throughout the country. I have a vivid recollection of the hon. member for Bow River rising in his place last session and saying that we had no organization to meet a possible shortage of fuel in the west this winter. In the light of what has taken place, I think it can be said that we were

not only prepared but overprepared, having regard to weather conditions, to meet the fuel situation in western and eastern Canada this year.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): Providence helped you out that time.

Mr. MITCHELL: I will give Providence some credit but not my hon. friend. In June of last year an emergency existed in the production of an adequate supply of fuel and the government found it necessary to pass new regulations in an effort to direct back to employment in coal mining experienced miners who had taken up employment in other industries. Our efforts in that direction were largely successful. We arranged for the return to the mines of practically every experienced coal miner fit for such employment. We also had the full cooperation of the Department of National Defence in granting leave to ex-coal miners so that they could assist in the emergency. We planned on the basis of an average winter on the prairies and elsewhere, and the mild weather conditions prevailing during the past several months have changed completely the usual fuel requirements, especially the requirements for domestic fuel.

During the past several weeks a number of operators in the domestic fields have laid off men when they no longer had orders for their coal.

My hon. friends will understand why much of that coal, particularly Alberta coal, cannot be piled. It deteriorates, falls to pieces. It is not like Nova Scotia coal.

Mr. MacNICOL: It disintegrates.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): It is good coal.

Mr. MITCHELL: May I say to my hon. friend that he will need more than Providence when he comes to put some of his monetary theories into operation.

An hon. MEMBER: It is taking a long time.

Mr. MITCHELL: Exactly. Recently representatives of the fuel controller and national selective service met in Calgary in order to try to find a solution to the very real problems arising out of the reduced production of domestic fuel in Alberta. We are attempting, in so far as possible, to transfer men from the domestic fields to the bituminous fields, but the movement in that direction has not yet been large, because there is also a falling-off in the man-power requirements of the bituminous coal operators.