

Inquiries of the Ministry

Lasalle in his capacity as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications. In view of the fact that the length of the present session is somewhat uncertain, would he give an assurance to the house that a meeting of that committee will be held before the house adjourns to deal with the matter involving the Great Slave Lake Railway?

Mr. H.-Pit Lessard (LaSalle): If it is the wish of the committee, I am willing to call a meeting.

GRAIN**WHEAT—ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF BOX CARS—
ABILITY OF PRODUCERS TO DELIVER**

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Earlier I asked the minister whether there would be an assurance from the railways that adequate box cars would be supplied to all country delivery points so that at least a minimum five-bushel quota could be delivered. Can the minister bring us up to date on what are the hopes for the supply of box cars by the railways inasmuch as there are only a few days left before the end of the crop year?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I was in touch with the Chief Commissioner of the Wheat Board just a few minutes ago. He assured me that maximum efforts are being made by the railways in order to reach the objective which is the five-bushel quota level. I may say in passing that 940 stations are now on a five-bushel quota, 709 are now on a four-bushel quota and 167 on three bushels. So there is progress every-day. It is still considered physically possible to reach the objective, but I must add immediately that difficulties have arisen in recent days because of unusually large offerings by producers as a result of circumstances with which the hon. member is familiar.

Mr. Korchinski: In view of the fact that there are only a few more days left, would the Wheat Board immediately open up the remaining delivery points to the five-bushel quota and concentrate on the delivery of a sufficient number of box cars?

Mr. Pepin: I hope I understand the hon. member well. If he has in mind the opening up of all delivery points and telling everybody that they should be on the five-bushel quota, this would not do much in reality to

bring about the objective which we have in mind.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Inasmuch as there are only eight days left in the crop year and in view of the figure he gave as to the number of points on a four-bushel quota, did I understand him correctly that he is seriously informing the house he expects the producers to be able to deliver a five-bushel quota in the current crop year?

Mr. Speaker: The question as asked is clearly argumentative. Perhaps it might be asked in other terms.

Mr. Gleave: May I rephrase it? Is the minister informing the house that producers will be able to deliver a five-bushel quota in the current crop year?

Mr. Pepin: I was very careful in the choice of my words. I said that this was still the objective but I also said that the realization of the objective was made more difficult every day because of the number of requests for delivery that are made. Many people who did not have wheat to deliver a few days ago seem to have found some to deliver now.

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): May I ask the minister whether he would give consideration to recommending changes in Wheat Board regulations to allow deliveries to elevators with space that now have a five-bushel quota by those people who cannot deliver to points that have no space and are only on a four-bushel quota, so that at the end of the crop year all the available elevator space will be utilized?

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon Souris): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the block system of grain movement recently introduced by the Canadian Wheat Board and referred to by the Minister without Portfolio last evening as one of the government's solutions to this problem assist in a major way in ensuring the delivery of the five-bushel quota at all delivery points? If not, what other emergency plan has the government in mind to deal with this problem?

Mr. Pepin: I was informed the other day that this system was of assistance in the limited number of districts where it was operative. I was also informed that the block system would be implemented everywhere by the end of this year. Consequently it will help even more next year.