

cars to the blocks where the congestion is most serious. Of course, a good deal of the allocation of cars within blocks is in the hands of the elevator companies rather than the Wheat Board under the rules of the block shipment system. Movement of grain is going along rapidly, but in certain places there will be some congestion until the fullest movement begins with the opening of navigation to the east.

Mr. Horner (Battleford-Kindersley): Would the minister not agree that the problem seems to lie in the way boxcars are allocated to the blocks? For part of the year the allocation is based on space available in the elevators. If this allocation is fair for part of the year, why is it not fair for the whole year? Should boxcars not be allocated all year according to space available?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The supplementary is perhaps couched in argumentative language, but possibly the minister might be allowed to reply.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, certain producers certainly were concerned about the question of whether or not the Bracken formula was creating some of the congestion problems. We conducted a thorough investigation of the situation only to find that the amount of space available was fairly equal among the various elevator companies with the Bracken formula operating. Further, we asked the Canadian Wheat Board to try to ensure that some shifting of cars from non-congested blocks to congested blocks could occur at the request of the elevator companies. In other words, in assessing the situation we found that since congestion was evenly spread among the elevator companies it was not a matter of the sharing of the business which was creating the problem at individual points.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. Since this is a chronic condition that has existed for some time, will he meet with the Canadian Transport Commission and the Canadian Wheat Board to get down to cases, find out what the problem is and arrive at a solution?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is well aware that I had just that kind of meeting with the Canadian Wheat Board, not just days ago but weeks ago, and got their agreement to attempt to move allocations of shipping orders to those areas where congestion was most serious. I should emphasize, as I have said before in the House, that it was the Wheat Board's decision to raise quotas rather more rapidly than I would have liked in the fall and early winter that gave rise to the possibility of congestion which will not be relieved until the very rapid movement that occurs in the spring period begins. I should point out that the movement at the present time is in fact more rapid than in any other year for the winter months, but obviously not as much grain moves while Thunder Bay is frozen so it will be April before we see very rapid movement again.

Oral Questions

FINANCE

CONTINGENCY PLANS TO CONTROL INCREASE IN SHELTER COSTS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Peel South): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In light of the fact that shelter prices rose .7 per cent last month and increased over the last 12 months by 6.4 per cent, would the minister advise the House whether the government has designed any contingency plans to abate shelter price increases?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the plans which the Prime Minister has been revealing to the House about the subject of price and wage controls are in general terms.

Mr. Blenkarn: In light of the fact that over-all fiscal and monetary policy has an immense effect on shelter costs, has the government any target for 1973 with respect to the limits to which shelter costs will be allowed to rise?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, already answered that last week so far as CMHC is concerned. If shelter were to be dealt with specifically, it might well fall under provincial jurisdiction.

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GRAIN

CHARGES AGAINST ALBERTA FARMERS RESPECTING WHEAT AND RAPESEED QUOTAS

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Justice. He may answer it either as Minister of Justice or as the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. Is he aware that in one community alone in the province of Alberta 40 farmers have been charged with violations of the Wheat Board regulations in connection with wheat quotas, and a number have been charged with violations of the rapeseed quotas? Further, is he prepared to hold the charges in reference to rapeseed in abeyance until the Supreme Court has ruled in that regard? Also, will he advise the House whether any of the farmers received notice prior to being charged under these regulations, which I may say are numerous?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, that question was extremely broad in its scope, and I would have to ask the hon. member to give me an indication of the specific charges to which he is referring. Obviously such charges are laid from time to time by the Wheat Board in an attempt to enforce its act and regulations in order to ensure orderly marketing and fair delivery opportunities for farmers across the prairie region. I would want to look into the specific second part of the hon. member's question. I assume counsel for the defence and counsel for the Wheat Board have that well in mind.

Mr. Woolliams: The charges were laid in the Bentley-Red Deer district and I am advised by the farmers, although I have not had a chance to check this, that there