

Supply—Transport

approval of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. It is clearly not a matter that concerns the Department of Transport. I am sure my hon. friends brought it up so that it would get the attention of either one or other minister, and through this discussion it will be brought to the attention of the minister.

Mr. Knight: What the minister has said confirms that the charge is applied by the elevator companies. It is the elevator companies that assess the charge.

Mr. Chevrier: That is right.

Mr. Wright: I should like to say a few words on this matter. At the present time the difficulty seems to be in getting cars to move this grain over the Hudson Bay railway to the port of Churchill. The elevators there are capable of storing two and a half million bushels of grain. There is in storage at the present time approximately 450,000 bushels. I was with the group who visited Churchill quite recently. In talking to the man in charge of the elevator there he informed me that they have facilities to dry from 15,000 to 20,000 bushels of grain each twenty-four hours. There is a large amount of damp and tough grain in northeastern Saskatchewan that will be spoiling, if it is not already spoiling, because of the high moisture content. Yet we have facilities there for drying this grain. The difficulty seems to be in getting sufficient cars to move the grain into position at the port of Churchill. I am told on reasonably good authority that a number of sales have been made of No. 5 wheat. I have been told that seven cargoes of No. 5 wheat have been sold out of Churchill. With the facilities there to dry wheat, with the wheat available in a favourable freight zone to Churchill, the only difficulty seems to be in obtaining box cars to move the grain into position at Churchill where it may be dried. Has the minister any information as to what cars might be available for moving this grain to Churchill?

Last year we were able to move something over 7 million bushels out of the port of Churchill. This year, unless some of this lower grade grain, grain that is damp or tough, can be moved into position at Churchill before navigation opens so that the boats may come in there and load before the new crop is available for export from that port, the amount of grain shipped through Churchill is going to be considerably reduced. I think the minister should make every effort to see that box cars are diverted into that area. The information I have is that if we could move 15 million bushels of grain through that port we would not have these annual deficits so far as the Hudson Bay railway is concerned, that the railway would be operating

at a profit. The hold-up seems to be the availability of box cars to move the grain. Has the minister any information?

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, last night I put on the record a very detailed and up to date statement on the present position of box cars in Canada. The fact is that the position is almost back to normal. My hon. friend is probably aware that the movement of grain to Churchill generally starts in June or July and does not start at this time. Furthermore, it is not directed by this department. The movement of wheat is directed by the wheat board.

Mr. Ross (Souris): Before the item carries I should like to ask one question following this discussion of the box car situation. I dealt pretty thoroughly with the Churchill situation last night but again this morning I had some wires from points in my own constituency about the box car situation for the movement of grain. I wonder if the minister would state how these cars are allocated. I know when I came here in January the station agent where I live had received instructions from the chairman of the wheat board at that time placing an embargo against dry grain until further notice. He was only to allow the shipment of damp grain. That was last January. Is the wheat board entirely responsible for the allocation of these cars for the shipment of grain? Have they been responsible since last August for the shipment of grain?

Mr. Chevrier: Yes, they have.

Mr. Ross (Souris): The Canadian wheat board officials are entirely responsible?

Mr. Chevrier: Yes. Will my hon. friend read the statement which I put on *Hansard* last night? He will find that the present position is with reference to the box car situation, and also a statement by the chief commissioner of the Canadian wheat board.

Mr. Ross (Souris): Yes, I will do that. I am sorry I was absent and missed that last night. I have not checked *Hansard* too closely. As I stated last evening, I sat in the Manitoba legislature at Easter and heard their minister of agriculture give many figures as to the amount of damp grain still to be moved in Manitoba if it was not to spoil there. I am quite sure there is a great deal more than that in Saskatchewan. It seems to me that somebody has rather bungled this matter so far as damp grain is concerned when we have this expensive and fine layout at Churchill.

I did not follow the minister when he said that grain does not start to move until the middle of the summer. I think this has been