

*Supply—Agriculture*

January 15, 1963 from Hon. Alvin Hamilton, the then minister of agriculture, and is addressed to Mr. Edward T. Applewhaite, who was then the secretary of the Prince Rupert chamber of commerce. I might say that Mr. Applewhaite was a former member of this house and occupied the esteemed position that you hold, Mr. Chairman. He was well respected by everyone in the house on that occasion, and I have the privilege of succeeding him in office. In this letter to Mr. Applewhaite of January a year ago Mr. Hamilton winds up by saying this:

The conclusion we came to after very careful consideration is that we cannot at this time recommend an increase in the capacity of the Prince Rupert elevator. I have requested the board to keep the matter under constant review, bearing in mind the current pattern of grain movement.

I think he would be referring there to the board of grain commissioners who had authorized a study of and an inquiry into this question, and incidentally they reported and recommended favourably on an increase in the facilities at Prince Rupert.

Then on May 23, 1963 there was a further exchange of correspondence between the Prince Rupert chamber of commerce and the minister. On that day the present minister wrote a letter—at least, I have a photocopy of a letter which bears a rubber stamp indicating it had originally been signed by H. W. Hays—the last sentence of which is as follows:

However, the situation is that the government is planning no present extension of its elevator facilities on the Pacific coast.

It will be recalled that this was at the time, or just prior to the time, of the last immense sale of grain.

In the fall of last year when that announcement was made the premier of British Columbia, Hon. W. A. C. Bennett, sent a telegram to the Minister of Trade and Commerce congratulating him and the government on arranging the largest ever sale of Canadian grain. The premier's telegram is in part, as follows:

The shipments will tax the handling capacity of Canadian ports and I would ask you to give special consideration to the port of Prince Rupert. If there is any way our government can be of assistance to you in this matter please call on us.

So in September of last year there was an offer of assistance from the premier and the government of the province of British Columbia.

The reply to that telegram of the Minister of Trade and Commerce on September 27 was, in part, as follows:

You may rest assured that the port of Prince Rupert will be used to its utmost capacity right up to the end of next July.

So there is an indication of a more favourable attitude toward the use of the grain elevator at Prince Rupert as at September of last year.

Then His Worship Mayor Lester of the city of Prince Rupert sent a telegram to the Minister of Agriculture about this matter on October 3 last. The Minister of Trade and Commerce, in replying to that telegram—and this is a most significant statement and far more important than any of the others which had been made prior to it—said this:

The Prince Rupert elevator is one of the most efficiently operated in all Canada—

which is what everyone who has any knowledge of its operations has always said—

—and I can assure you that fuller use will be made of its facilities.

You will have noticed earlier, Mr. Chairman, that in writing to the premier of British Columbia in September of last year the Minister of Trade and Commerce had said that "the port of Prince Rupert will be used to its utmost capacity". Then later on in October of last year, in writing to the mayor of the city of Prince Rupert, he said "and I can assure you that fuller use will be made of its facilities". All of that indicates that there is a growing need to increase the capacity of the grain elevator in Prince Rupert.

I also have before me, Mr. Chairman, a memorandum to the board of grain commissioners which recommends favourably in this regard. I should like to quote part of this memorandum.

It is our considered opinion that even with additional storage capacity of one million bushels, the maximum volume of grain which could efficiently be handled through the Prince Rupert terminal annually would amount to no more than 12 million bushels. This amount was, in fact, handled at Prince Rupert in the year 1952-53, but it must be stated that it was not an efficient operation because of the limited capacity of the elevator. For most of the years since the elevator was reopened in 1951, we have handled approximately 10 million bushels through the terminal each year and in each of these years the operation could not be considered efficient for the same reason mentioned above.

To support our contention that an additional one million bushels storage space is required at Prince Rupert to have an efficient operation with the same annual volume as is presently being handled, we wish to make the following observations which we feel would justify the necessary expenditure for the additional storage.

I do not want to read the memorandum in its entirety, because it is a document of three pages, but facts and statistics are given in detail as to why the grain elevator in Prince Rupert should be expanded. The memorandum, which incidentally is dated April 12, 1962, almost two years ago now, concludes in the last two paragraphs as follows: