

*Inquiries of the Ministry***AIRPORTS**

DORVAL—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON PROGRESS OF CONSTRUCTION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): May I direct a question to the Minister of Transport. Is the minister aware of the many criticisms that have appeared in the Montreal press concerning delays in the completion of Dorval airport? I wonder whether the minister would tell the house when he expects the airport to be in use. Perhaps he might also be good enough to make a statement as to the progress of construction of the terminal.

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for giving me notice of his intention to ask this question. I should like to tell him that during the years I was in the opposition I used to read regularly the complaints in the Montreal press about the delay in connection with this airport. Upon receiving his question this morning I made inquiries of my air services branch and received from them the following report.

The substantial delays that plagued the Dorval airport terminal building during the early years of its construction—and I might remind my hon. friend that those were the years when the government of which he was a member had responsibility for these things—have now been substantially overcome, and progress has been satisfactory and indeed rapid in the completion of the interior of the building over the last year and a half—and I might say that is the period during which we have had responsibility—so much so that the main building is now well advanced toward completion.

Mr. Speaker, I see no reason to vary my earlier estimate that the building will be ready for occupancy next year.

Mr. Chevrier: May I ask a supplementary question. In view of the non-political answer the minister has made may I put this question to him. In the two years during which his government has been in office, what progress has been made toward the opening of the terminal which, after all, the air-minded people of Montreal are anxious to have?

Mr. Hees: When we took office I would estimate that the terminal was about five years from completion. We have been in office for two years. It is now one year from completion. Therefore, by simple arithmetic, we have gained two years over the progress made by the former administration.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

GRAIN

INQUIRY AS TO REPORT ON ALLOCATION OF BOX CARS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Can the minister say whether progress similar to that being made in the Department of Transport can be made in the minister's own department in the bringing in of a better system of box car allocation? What further consideration has now been given to the report of the Bracken commission? My specific question is this. What action is contemplated to remove this festering sore?

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, these are rather extravagant statements, especially the talk about the festering sore. The situation with regard to box cars is not nearly as difficult as it was a few years ago under the former administration, when grain congestion plagued the prairies. Under the active measures taken by the Department of Trade and Commerce and the wheat board, equal to those taken by the Department of Transport, grain is being moved off the prairies to such an extent that there is no problem in connection with box car allocation such as there was a few years ago.

With regard to action concerning the report of the Bracken inquiry, I have purposely delayed any action in order to give every opportunity to those people who made representations to Mr. Bracken to study the report and make their comments upon it. I have been receiving comments from interested individuals over the past few weeks, and I think it is rather important that everybody have a full opportunity to study that report. I have only just heard from the Canadian wheat board their comments concerning that report. These steps must be taken before a policy can be formulated and an announcement made in the house.

Mr. Argue: May I ask a supplementary question. In view of the government's willingness to lay before parliament its legislative program, can the Minister of Trade and Commerce say whether any amendments to any existing acts will be necessary this session as a result of the report of the royal commission?

Mr. Churchill: Any such amendments that are determined upon will be announced in due course.