

*Marketing Act—Mr. Ilesley*

enactment of this bill and will ask for a revocation of the scheme.

This bill contains principles to which I cannot subscribe and I shall have to say quite reluctantly that I cannot support it. I believe in the sincerity of the minister and I am confident that there is no hon. member more desirous of doing the very best that can be done for farm and other producers.

Mr. J. L. ILSLEY (Hants-Kings): Mr. Speaker, I come from a part of the Dominion of Canada in which there has been some demand for the establishing of a marketing board for the natural products of this country, therefore I have watched with a great deal of interest the introduction of this bill and followed closely the explanation given by the minister on the motion for second reading. During the Easter recess I took the opportunity of consulting with fruit growers' organizations in Nova Scotia and with other people who are interested in the fruit industry. I discussed the provisions of this bill and received a variety of representations. Some of those interested in the fruit industry were disposed to be exceedingly critical of the bill, while others were disposed to be friendly to it. However, as a member of parliament representing the largest fruit exporting district in Canada it becomes my duty to exercise my individual judgment upon the bill. I have been endeavouring to do this during the past few days with a view to deciding what stand I should take upon the motion for second reading.

While I am disposed to compliment the minister upon the tone and character of his speech, I cannot help regretting that he did not take up the bill itself and give the reasons why various clauses had been inserted—particularly section 4—and an explanation for his departure from the Agricultural Marketing Act of Great Britain, which has been so fully and ably dealt with by the hon. member for Last Mountain (Mr. Butcher). If we pass this bill we will be delegating immense powers to some minister, presumably the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir) although it may possibly be the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens). The operation of the legislation will depend upon how the minister exercises those powers. I think the minister owed it to those of us who are deeply interested in this legislation to give us a much fuller explanation of the clauses of the bill and the intentions of the government when the bill has become law. It has been suggested that the legislation is intended to remain a dead letter, its introduction being on the eve of an election and the government

[Mr. Butcher.]

having no intention of taking any effective action under it. I have no grounds for saying that that is the case, but if the government has a well thought out and defined policy of marketing, the minister should give us information in that regard on the second reading of the bill. But the minister did not do so, and we have to take the bill as it stands. We cannot assume that the drastic powers which are conferred upon the government by this measure will not be exercised. Some of those in my constituency who urged that I support this bill have said: "Yes, these powers are exceedingly drastic, and we can understand how in their working out great injustice might be done or great inconvenience suffered, but we must not assume that the government will misuse the powers granted under the bill or need not assume that the government will invoke those powers." I do not think a member of parliament should vote to confer powers the exercise of which he disapproves. For this reason I am afraid that I shall have to oppose the bill as it stands.

Having gone so far, I think I owe it to my constituents and perhaps to the house to give the reasons for the position I take. In order to do that I must put before the house what I consider to be a picture of the legislation. I want to make it clear that this bill does not set up only one board. Some of the language, particularly that in clause 4, seems to be especially applicable to the fruit industry, and for that reason it may be convenient to set forth what I understand to be the plan or intention of the government in reference to that industry.

In the first place, and at the top of the system, there will be a dominion marketing board consisting probably of three members. Beneath that dominion marketing board, which will have to do, of course, not only with apples but with natural products as a whole, there shall or may be a commodity board which will have to do with apples or fruit alone, and it will be the duty of that commodity board to reconcile the conflicting interests and coordinate the different demands of the various apple producing provinces. That will be necessary; the only alternative will be another fruit branch under the dominion marketing board itself. It does not make much difference which you have; extensive machinery will be required to look after the fruit industry as such if fruit is brought within the provisions of this measure.

That is the second board. Under those two boards will be of necessity a provincial board dealing with fruit, and the provincial board