

Meantime business will try to go on, and we know that business is to a great extent formulated upon the basis of contracts ahead. We do not grow a crop overnight; we have to make contracts stretching out perhaps eighteen months ahead. The minister thought that my objection in that regard could be met by saying that no doubt any local board would be keen to recognize contracts. That is not necessarily so. They may take a very narrow view and say, "We are running this thing, and we will do what we think best." I heard only the other day about a man who said that if the bill passed with no contract provision he was going to cancel certain contracts he was then making because he would have no assurance that the producer would be able to fulfil them. He did not make the statement in any political or nasty sense. If the minister is not prepared to incorporate my suggestion in the bill would he at least give the committee some assurance that when any board is constituted any bona fide contract entered into in pursuance of the ordinary course of business, whether it be for a short or a long period, according to the custom of the trade, will be recognized for the period of its existence by the local board?

Mr. WEIR (Melfort): While in certain instances I agree with what the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill) has said, I know he would not expect me to make a statement now which would in any way or to too great an extent embarrass a local board. I can say this, however, that what he has said will be borne in mind in connection with the formation of boards.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bury): Shall the clause carry?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I make one suggestion to the minister? It arises out of the second part of the bill but bears upon the part we have been discussing. My suggestion is occasioned by a change which the minister is proposing to make in the second part of the bill. When the legislation was drafted in part II it left to local investigating committees the power to determine what were offences. According to the amendment of which the minister has given notice the ministry intends to do away with the right of the local committees to determine offences, and instead places on those local committees the duty of making reports to the government. What constitutes the offence is set forth in a clause by itself, and undoubtedly the report to the government will help to draw attention to what may be an infringement of that

provision. If there were a similar alteration made in the first part of the bill with respect to these powers to create offences being given by local boards, such alteration would go a long way towards meeting the objections I have been raising to the powers the minister is giving. If instead of giving to the local boards, which are as yet unknown and unconstituted, the power to determine what are to be offences—this parliament having only the duty of naming the penalty which is to attach to the offence—the minister would have the local boards report to him or to the governor in council and let the governor in council, which is responsible to parliament, create the offence, thereby having the law made applicable and uniform from one end of the country to the other, we would be proceeding infinitely more in accord with parliamentary procedure, and would be adopting a course which would prove to be a real protection to the producers themselves. I am afraid that, left as it is, the measure will help to penalize the very persons in whose interests it is being passed. For example, if a group of producers determine that a certain kind of action is to be an offence in the particular locale in which they are operating, and such offence is not one applicable generally to the whole of the producers in Canada carrying on similar business, those who are affected will certainly be handicapped. There is another danger which I see, namely that a group of inefficient producers might wish to rid themselves, if I may use that expression, of some efficient producer who is not carrying on his business as the majority of the producers may wish it to be carried on. As I read the bill, an offence might be created by interested competitors which would serve to put such an individual completely out of business, I do not think that is a power which should be given to any group, in any community, at any time. No group of individuals should have the power, through power given them by this parliament, to subject those who are in competition with themselves to the possibility of both fine and imprisonment. I believe the main purpose the minister has in mind could be served if, as I say, instead of allowing the local boards to create the offences they permitted the ministry itself to determine the offences. Though parliament to my mind is the only proper authority. I believe it would be even better if all the schemes presented were dealt with in a similar manner. That is the manner in which the British legislation proceeds. In Britain it is not so much the locality as the ministry which determines the