

APPENDIX No. 3

Mr. FRANCOIS OCTAVE DUGAS, Member for Montcalm, was present by invitation for examination.

By Mr. Monk:

Q. Mr. Dugas, you represent the county of Montcalm?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Will you tell the Committee if the cultivation and manufacture of tobacco is extensively practised in your county?—A. Yes. I may say that the average crop of tobacco grown in the county of Montcalm is between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 pounds a year.

Q. Have you had occasion, Mr. Dugas, to look over the provisions of the Bill which is being examined by this committee?—A. Yes, I read the Bill and studied it.

Q. Do you think that the method of co-operation favoured by the provisions of the Bill would be of use to the people in your county in the cultivation of tobacco, and will you state in what respect it might be useful?—A. Yes, the provisions of the Bill will be of great use to the farmers in my county in this way: in Canada tobacco is put on the market without being properly prepared—

The CHAIRMAN.—Cured.

The WITNESS.—It is not cured. In the United States, where they grow tobacco, the farmers used to have their tobacco dried in their shed, and then it was sold to some parties who took charge of the tobacco and they had it, what they called redried, or cured, and sorted. In Canada there is no such thing as that. The tobacco is sold, put on the market without being redried as in the United States. I may say that the value of the tobacco does not reside in the culture or growing of the weed; but it resides in the preparation, in the handling of the tobacco after it is dried in the farmer's shed. In the United States the farmers, once their tobacco is dried, sell it to parties who are called re-handlers, or packers, and these people prepare the tobacco so as to give it its real value. Then the manufacturers buy the tobacco from these packers or re-handlers. No manufacturer buys tobacco direct from the farmer because it is not suitable for industry at that time. I find here in the *Journal d'Agriculture et d'Horticulture de Québec* a good illustration of what I am just stating. A paragraph in that journal says: 'Tobacco uncured, only dried and not having been fermented does not deserve the name of smoking tobacco any more than the juice of the grape unfermented, deserves to be called wine.' So there must be between tobacco growers and the industrial people an intermediate here in Canada just as the thing exists in the United States. In the county of Montcalm, two years ago, some farmers tried to form a kind of a partnership or company for the purpose of erecting a building and carrying on this rehandling or curing of tobacco. They thought the capital required would be over \$5,000. The more enthusiastic farmers subscribed up to the amount of very nearly \$2,000 and the scheme was well thought of by all the people there. Other parties, being less enthusiastic, being afraid that their money would not be properly managed, there being no regular corporation or firm, did not subscribe. I am quite sure, if this Bill becomes law, enabling a company to be very easily formed, that in my county there would not be one, but several societies of this kind formed amongst the farmers themselves.

By the Chairman:

Q. You believe that the individual effort will be a collective effort?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Monk:

Q. Would it be a saving to the farmers?—A. It would be a large saving to the farmers. You see in the county of Montcalm alone, where the crop is over 3,000,000 pounds a year, there are about twenty-five tobacco traders. These are farmers who