

Marketing Act

That is a very full and complete list. If any scheme is proposed and adopted in regard to any one of these enumerated articles, it becomes a regulated product, and the fullest investigation can take place in regard to it. So I think that for our present purposes we are on pretty safe ground if we leave the bill as it is with the amendment now proposed, and if after the Stevens committee has reported, legislation is necessary in regard to that matter, I have no doubt that suitable legislation will be introduced. I agree with the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Brown) when he says that in his opinion any act to authorize an inquiry in regard to price spreads in general should be a separate act and not involved or connected with what is a marketing bill pure and simple. I think we would be on safer ground to treat this as a marketing bill in regard to regulated products, in accordance with all the clauses which heretofore have been passed, and await the report of the committee now sitting in regard to price spreads. If legislation then becomes necessary, by all means let us have it.

Mr. COOTE: Might I direct the attention of the minister to section 9, under which the minister, if he is satisfied that trade and commerce in a natural product is injuriously affected by the lack of a local board, may at any time propose a scheme for the marketing of that product. Surely the minister should have the power conferred under section 16 to authorize an investigation into the costs of production, price spreads, trade practices and all these other matters, to enable him to determine whether he should set up a board for this very purpose. How else is the minister to determine whether that local board should be set up for that particular product? If there has been no application made to him which would bring the product under the terms of this section, surely the minister needs this power so that he may know whether that board is necessary.

Then may I say that in my opinion if any worth while use is to be made of this marketing act the minister must set up machinery for the express purpose of investigating this question of spreads and other matters in regard to natural products. Surely that machinery, once it is set up, should be used for all this investigational work, whether or not it is in regard to a regulated product. At the start we have no regulated products; the amount of investigational work done by the minister or by somebody else is going to determine how many boards will be asked for, or rather the number of products for which regulation will be asked, and certainly I think

[Mr. Guthrie.]

the minister would be well advised to take advantage of this machinery. I do not see how it can weaken the act in any way; it will make it far more worth while, and I think it will secure for the act a larger measure of support from some who are perhaps very lukewarm with regard to the first part of it. Personally I think section 16 should be left as it is at present. It may be that it should be amended to read "any natural or regulated product" which would bring it a little more in line with the other sections of the act, but if any other sections require to be changed because the words "natural product" are left in this section, it would not be a very difficult job to amend the other sections so that section 16 would not come in conflict with them. Personally I hope the minister can see his way clear to leaving the words "natural product" in section 16.

Mr. WEIR (Melfort): I see no reason why the word "regulated" should not be changed to "natural," or why it should not read, "natural or regulated product."

Mr. McKENZIE (Assiniboia): I am afraid part II of this bill is designed to anticipate the report of the committee set up a couple of months ago to investigate price spreads, and if this is all we are going to get from the work of that committee by way of legislation then I say it is by no means sufficient. As a matter of fact I have had the matter of price spreads before this chamber on more than one occasion. On February 19, when the present committee was appointed, I made the statement that in my opinion this method was too roundabout to deal with the matter. This committee has been sitting for a matter of two months, and I think the government are beginning to realize that this question is too big to be handled in this way. We are told that the government are paying between \$200 and \$300 a day for solicitors for that committee, and that already the committee has cost in the neighbourhood of \$75,000. If that is the case, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that the sooner we dispense with the solicitors the better it will be. I have sat in the committee on many occasions; I have listened to the work of the solicitors, and in my opinion the committee would get some place if it had no solicitors. As it is, the solicitor is more or less a buffer for the government.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bury): The hon. member is hardly in order.

Mr. McKENZIE (Assiniboia): Then if I am not in order this section is not in order.