

Edmonton, since the establishment of the stock-yards, the condition of the shipper has been greatly improved, although the features that this Bill is intended to improve may be still in existence there.

Mr. THORNTON: Would it undertake to regulate the conduct of a live-stock commission merchant?

Mr. BURRELL: Yes.

Mr. THORNTON: Because there are grievous and well-founded complaints of the treatment that drovers and farmers get from commission men.

Mr. BURRELL: There will be ample provisions in the Bill to exercise the fullest control in the interests of the shipper. I was going to suggest that, after the resolution is reported, the Bill to be founded on it should be referred to the Committee on Agriculture, where it could be fully discussed without taking up the time of the House.

Mr. MORPHY: Why does the minister go so far here? The general discussion would indicate that this was a Bill relating to live-stock, but the resolution also gives this commission apparent power to regulate how meat, poultry, eggs and wool shall be graded, packed and marked. That seems to be a very broad departure. Am I to understand that every farmer who ships to that exchange must be subject to the regulations of this board?

Mr. BURRELL: It is not very well explained in the resolution, because the resolution embodies the whole Bill, but that is a separate feature entirely. The live-stock exchange and the stock-yards is one section of the Bill, and the Act to be cited as the Live-stock and Produce Act. The second part contains a clause which aims at the other feature, namely, the intention of the department and the Government to do something in the direction of generally supervising our live-stock products, bacon, eggs, wool and various other commodities, in which case we propose to consult all the interests thoroughly before passing the Bill. It is intended to link up the whole system contemplated by this Bill with the export trade.

Mr. MORPHY: Why is it necessary in this Bill to interject a clause providing for penalties for violating the Act or for obstructing an officer in the execution of his duty under it? It seems to me that the ordinary Criminal Code would apply to that, especially if the officer is a public officer.

[Mr. Burrell.]

It does not seem to me that a Bill dealing with farm produce or live-stock should have incorporated in it a clause of that kind. What is the reason for it?

Mr. BURRELL: Similar provisions have been inserted in a number of other Acts, both in my department and in others. This was done after consultation with the Parliamentary Counsel.

Mr. MORPHY: In a Bill like this, applicable to the countryside at large, I can see danger of that clause being taken advantage of by an inspector to take to himself power to which he has no right by threatening men with criminal prosecution under this section. It seems to me to be giving a drastic power to an inspector dealing with ordinary trade commodities, which should not be put in the Bill, because of the danger that an officer enforcing the Act might attempt to bulwark his own power by a threat of serious criminal prosecution. There has been some feeling of uneasiness on the part of the public because of the power that has been acquired by these stock commission merchants, and the law is sufficiently drastic to give any man all the protection he needs without incorporating a common, everyday clause of the Criminal Code in an Act respecting merchandise.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH: It appears to me that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Burrell) is taking a step in the right direction. This measure deals with a very important part of agriculture, live-stock. I would suggest to the minister that this resolution should be sent to the Committee on Agriculture, where it might be discussed in all its details, and no time would be lost.

Mr. NESBITT: I think no harm would be done if we allowed the drover to sell on the stock exchange or stockyard. I see no reason why I should not ship a bunch of steers or cattle to stockyards, and sell them without the intervention of a commission man. I do not think the Bill should force sales through the hands of a commission man. I understood the hon. minister to say, in answer to my hon. friend (Mr. Thornton), that that was the intention of the Bill. That would mean that no person outside of the big brokers on the exchange would be allowed to sell stock. I ask the minister to consider that question, because I think his object is to make the market as open as possible, and to regulate it as well as possible to protect the interests of the ordinary greenhorn.