

Stevens) was in the house, I asked the minister the following question as reported on page 3004:

May I ask the minister whether part II of the marketing bill, which deals with investigations, is intended to relate to the work of this committee, to serve the purpose of carrying on the kind of investigations the committee may wish to have made, or whether that part of the marketing bill is wholly apart from the work of the price spreads committee?

At the time we were discussing interim supply in connection with the work of the different committees of the house.

Mr. Stevens: The provisions of any legislation now before the house did not emanate from any committee; that is clear. It is quite obvious, however, to any student of the situation that there is much in the marketing act, for example, that with intelligent anticipation might be declared to be useful in dealing with problems which may be dealt with by the committee. To what extent, of course, I cannot hazard any expression of opinion at this time.

Mr. Mackenzie King: It seemed to me on reading the bill that part II was the kind of measure which possibly the minister would have brought in after the report of the committee had been made, in other words, that he was anticipating the report to-day and giving us legislation in advance.

Mr. Stevens: The right hon. gentleman will note that the marketing bill deals largely with agricultural and natural products.

Mr. Mackenzie King: Yes, natural products as defined and investigation into a wide field of operations.

Mr. Stevens: The price spreads and mass buying committee deals with that, of course, but deals with mercantile business generally, which is much wider in its scope.

I submit the ministry ought to tell us quite frankly whether this change is being suggested at the moment in order to confine this measure solely to natural products as set forth in the definition, with the intention of later this session bringing in legislation which will provide for investigation into such matters as those for example that the price spreads committee is inquiring into. If it is the intention of the government to bring in further legislation we should be advised of that now, because it would undoubtedly affect our attitude with regard to the provisions of part II of this measure as it stands. If the government does not intend to bring in further legislation to provide for investigation under proper conditions into all these matters into which the price spreads committee is inquiring at the present time, I think this part II ought to remain as it is without change in the nature of any restriction of its scope. If there is any change to be made it should not be made in the section now being discussed, changing "natural product" to "regul-

ated product," but wherever the words "regulated product" are used in the other sections there should be substituted the words "natural product" or "any product."

When the bill was originally introduced I took strong exception to part I. I have further made known my reasons for that exception quite openly and frankly in the discussion. But I said at the beginning that I strongly favoured the provision for investigation in part II of the measure because I believed there were many evils which publicity would cure much more effectively than penalty. And while there were in part II certain sections that I thought ought to be altered, I still favoured anything that with proper safeguards to innocent parties would at least provide facilities for investigation of unfair or unethical practices or industrial abuses of any kind. I want to take that position very strongly at the present time. I want to make the part of this bill relating to investigations just as wide as it can possibly be made, to enable the ministry—with proper safeguards to innocent parties of course, to prevent political pressure dictating the investigations to be made—to make it just as wide as it can be made to permit of thoroughgoing investigations into practices that are unfair or unethical in business or other matters; and in that connection to begin with primary products and have the measure extended so as to include any class of commercial or business transaction as well as production and trade.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I am sorry that I cannot give my right hon. friend any assurance that legislation will be introduced this session to carry out any suggestions or reports which may be made by the Stevens committee, which has been sitting for a long time and which has not yet concluded its sittings. I have no doubt that the committee will make a report, and it will depend upon what that report is as to what legislation if any will be introduced. On that point I can give no assurance at the present time.

But there is this to be said in favour of this bill as it stands. It includes a very general and generous line of natural products. Under the new definition it includes:

Animals, meats, eggs, wool, dairy products, grains, seeds, fruit and fruit products, vegetables and vegetable products, maple products, honey, tobacco, lumber, and such other natural products of the forest, sea, lake or river, and any article of food or drink wholly or partly manufactured or derived from any such product that may be designated by the governor in council, . . .