

*Inspection and Sale Act*

with the sale of commodities. There will be no means by which one can readily ascertain just what weight a given commodity added to section 18 should have. In other words, it is legislation by a single individual, adding to a section commodities that are not in the act at all and with respect to which under the act there is no means of making known to the public what the weight is and what the commodity is that is being dealt with under section 18. I think the minister will see that this is unsound, because here we are dealing with certain commodities in a statute. If subsection (b) of section 4 is to operate, there is no need of doing this at all. The minister needs only to pass that subsection and determine what shall be the weight of salt and other matters of that kind. If we come to parliament, as we are doing now, to deal with certain commodities, as is the case now, it seems to me that it is not logical or consonant with sound reason that we should depart from that procedure and leave it to the minister to add to section 18 any commodities he wishes.

I think the minister would be the first to object to that if he saw it himself, for it is hardly fair to the community. Subsection (b) need not be there next session. If the minister has additional items he comes to parliament, as he is doing to-day, and adds those items to section 18. I think it is an act of parliament, rather than the view of one individual who is the Minister of Agriculture for the moment, that should govern with respect to the matter. I think the minister will not regard that as an unfair statement. The Minister of Trade and Commerce is charged with the administration of the Weights and Measures Act. This is a special provision dealing with certain matters that are deemed to have greater bearing upon agriculture than upon matters of trade and commerce.

Mr. GARDINER: Mr. Chairman, I quite appreciate the strength of the argument advanced by the right hon. leader of the opposition, but I would suggest that it is really necessary to have subsection (b) there, for this reason: It is assumed that all the items which will need to be dealt with are now in the bill, but there is always the possibility that between sessions the necessity may arise for some weight being set upon the bushelage of something not now contemplated. I think it would be safer to have that power in the hands of the minister, acting on the advice of officials of the department, than to leave the commodity to be dealt in with no definite weight established until the house

[Mr. Bennett.]

may meet again. I would imagine that the only advantage which would be taken of this section would be to deal with cases of that kind.

Mr. BENNETT: Has the minister not answered his own argument? The fact that he comes to parliament at all to deal with binder twine and a number of other commodities now in section 18 is conclusive proof, in my judgment, that parliament and not the minister should deal with them. Otherwise it would be only necessary for the minister to pass subsection (b) and then make up his list. But parliament determines the weight of alfalfa seed, bituminous coal and matters of that kind, as they are set out in section 18 on page 4 of the bill. When we find it convenient to come here with respect to binder twine and salt, it indicates that with parliament meeting once a year there is only a period of about six months when parliament could not pass a bill dealing with other matters, and it is better that we should preserve some semblance of democracy in our institutions rather than say that notwithstanding the fact that we have come here to deal with these matters under section 18, we are now going to deal with similar matters by handing them over to the minister. I think the minister will admit that to be unsound. The answer to the argument advanced by the minister is contained in the very bill itself; otherwise there is no need of its being here.

Mr. GARDINER: I am sorry, but I do not think the leader of the opposition has really got my point. There is the possibility that some commodities with which we are not in these days dealing in Canada, may come to be dealt with at any time. By scientific and other means we are developing new commodities; we even have plants brought into sale from time to time which in previous years were not being dealt with commercially. For two or three months before the house meets there may be a need for somebody to define the weight at which that commodity is to be sold, and it seems quite fair to leave in the hands of the minister the power to set that weight. Then, when the house met, perhaps two or three months later, of course parliament could deal with the commodity and put it on some definite list.

Mr. SENN: A number of commodities in general commercial use are not included in this list. For instance, there are carrots, potatoes and other vegetables. They may be dealt with in another statute; I do not know,