

February 15.

Forced Registration Of Produce Growers Asked for Ontario

Markets Council Sees Better Prices for Fruit and Vegetables Being Secured, With Acreage Fee

HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARS DEPUTATION

Compulsory registration applying to every commercial grower of fruit and vegetables in Ontario was asked of the Legislature's Committee on Agriculture yesterday by a large delegation from the Ontario Growers' Markets Council. After an extensive brief had been read and the delegation closely questioned by committee members, a subcommittee was appointed to go into the matter still more fully with representative growers.

Gauge for "Futures."

As explained by M. M. Robinson of Burlington, spokesman for the delegation, the object of compulsory registration is to permit the grower to form an estimate of the total production of his crop, so that he may gauge probable prices when selling his "futures."

At present, it is claimed, no accurate estimate of acreage is possible, and prices actually are set by the first growers, who handicapped by ignorance, contract in the spring for sale of their summer's produce. Wider ramification of the situation, according to another member of the delegation, was that in international matters of tariffs and quotas Ontario producers were unable to back their arguments by the concrete figures which would be provided under the legislation proposed.

If legislation were passed as requested, the commercial grower who operated on anything larger than a one-acre scale would have to pay a fee based on acreage, ranging up from \$1. and with a rate of \$4 annually for a forty-acre farm. This fee would go to the Markets Council for continuation and extension of its present work. To each grower would be assigned a number, which he would be required to place on every package of produce he sold.

Bitter Fight Is Seen.

Part of the Markets Council's appeal is based on the effort to present a united front to the canners, it was shown by a clause in the brief reading: "This Council, with the moral support of our Governments, could add thousands of dollars to the income of our growers by heading up the fight with the canning industry—a fight which is only starting and which gives promise of developing into one of the most bitter in the history of agriculture in this Province."

In conclusion, the Council claimed that 25,000 Ontario produce-growers were solidly behind the movement. The Council "readily admits that there is a limit to Government paternalism, but it does contend that it is entitled to a ready acceptance on the part of our legislators of our considered requests." Without Government support, the Council said, it would "reluctantly have to fold up."

The principal query of committee members was as to how the proposed legislation would affect the average farmer. Mr. Robinson pointed out that growers of less than one-acre

status would not be affected; for the rest, he was certain that, although many might be reluctant now, all farmers affected would eventually realize that they were being benefited.

Questioned on the effect of the British Marketing Act, now engaging the attention of the Ottawa authorities, Mr. Robinson was certain that the present requested legislation would dovetail with any present or future Dominion or Provincial statute aimed to improve the lot of the average grower. In conclusion, he was none too optimistic over effects of his representations, but expressed the hope that if the committee did not accede to the present request "something might be prised out of the Government."

While the question of the proposed fee was occupying the attention of committee members, F. V. Laughton (Conservative, Middlesex North) broke in with the statement that niggling over details disgusted him. Other businesses would brush aside details which created long discussion in committee debates. "The system so far," he said, "has been nothing but a failure. I'm quite willing to risk my political life and try something new, to see if that will get results."

Subcommittee Named.

Eventually Chairman J. Edgar Jamieson (Conservative, Simcoe Southwest) appointed the following subcommittee to go into details with the growers and report back to the main committee: R. A. Baxter (Liberal, South Oxford), W. J. Bragg (Liberal, Durham), H. S. Colliver (Conservative, Prince Edward), Hon. J. S. Lyons (Conservative, Sault Ste. Marie), T. J. Mahony (Conservative, Wentworth North), William Newman (Liberal, Victoria North), Austin B. Smith (Conservative, Essex South), Frank Spence (Conservative, Fort William), and S. J. Wilson (Conservative, Lincoln).

Members of the delegation were: M. M. Robinson, Burlington; C. Delworth, Weston; C. T. Williams, Ottawa; C. Howard Fisher, Queenston; H. M. Tiffin, Islington; E. D. Worgan, Weston; W. J. Givings, Weston; G. C. Gibson, Islington; Robert Marshall, Islington; Finlay Morrison, Weston; R. Rowatt, Humber Bay; H. W. Hunt, Brighton; H. T. Foster, Burlington; J. Herbert Carter, Burlington; J. H. Price, Lambert Mills; A. E. Lucas, London; S. F. Ginson, Brighton; F. G. Harnden, Brighton; W. B. Somerset, Burlington; C. F. McGuire, Colborne; Walter H. Smith, Brighton; L. B. Reynolds, Waterford; George G. Reeves, Islington; Arthur Rowett, Islington; H. L. Craise, St. Catharines; John L. Smart, Collingwood; Fred J. Watson, Port Credit; Howard Caruthers, Thedford.