

IN THE MATTER OF
ALTURAS PACKING COMPANY, INCORPORATED

CONSENT ORDER, ETC., IN REGARD TO THE ALLEGED VIOLATION OF SEC. 2(c)
OF THE CLAYTON ACT

Docket 7999. Complaint, June 24, 1960—Decision, May 19, 1961

Consent order requiring a packer of citrus fruit in Bartow, Fla., to cease violating Sec. 2(c) of the Clayton Act by paying brokerage, or its equivalent, to customers making purchases for their own accounts for resale.

COMPLAINT

The Federal Trade Commission, having reason to believe that the party respondent named in the caption hereof, and hereinafter more particularly described, has been and is now violating the provisions of subsection (c) of Section 2 of the Clayton Act, as amended (U.S.C. Title 15, Section 13), hereby issues its complaint, stating its charges with respect thereto as follows:

PARAGRAPH 1. Respondent Alturas Packing Company, Incorporated, is a corporation organized, existing and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Florida, with its office and principal place of business located at Bartow, Florida, with mailing address as Post Office Box 837, Bartow, Florida.

PAR. 2. Respondent is now and for the past several years has been engaged in the business of packing, selling and distributing citrus fruit, such as oranges, tangerines and grapefruit, all of which are hereinafter sometimes referred to as citrus fruit or fruit products. Respondent sells and distributes its citrus fruit through brokers, as well as direct, to customers located in many sections of the United States. When brokers are utilized in making sales for it, respondent pays them for their services, a brokerage or commission, usually at the rate of 10 cents per 1¾ bushel box, or equivalent. Respondent's annual volume of business in the sale and distribution of citrus fruit is substantial.

PAR. 3. In the course and conduct of its business over the past several years, respondent has sold and distributed, and is now selling and distributing, its citrus fruit in commerce, as "commerce" is defined in the aforesaid Clayton Act, as amended, to buyers located in the several States of the United States other than the State of Florida in which respondent is located. Respondent transports or causes such citrus fruit, when sold, to be transported from its place of business or packing plant in the State of Florida, or from other places within the State, to such buyers or to the buyers' customers located in various other States of the United States. Thus, there has been at all times mentioned herein a continuous course of trade in commerce in said citrus fruit across state lines between said respondent and the respective buyers of such fruit.

PAR. 4. In the course and conduct of its business as aforesaid, respondent has been, and is now, making substantial sales of citrus fruit to some, but not all, of its brokers and other direct buyers purchasing for their own account for resale, and on a large number of these sales respondent paid, granted, or allowed, and is now paying, granting or allowing to these brokers and direct buyers on their own purchases, a commission, brokerage, or other compensation, or an allowance or discount in lieu thereof, in connection therewith.

PAR. 5. The acts and practices of respondent, as above alleged and described, are in violation of subsection (c) of Section 2 of the Clayton Act, as amended (U.S.C. Title 15, Section 13).

Mr. Cecil G. Miles and Mr. Ernest G. Barnes for the Commission.
Respondent, for itself.

INITIAL DECISION BY ABNER E. LIPSCOMB, HEARING EXAMINER

The complaint herein was issued on June 24, 1960, charging Respondent with violation of §2(c) of the Clayton Act, as amended (U.S.C. Title 15, §13), by paying, granting or allowing to some of its brokers and other direct buyers purchasing citrus fruit or fruit products from Respondent for their own account for resale, a commission, brokerage, or other compensation, or an allowance or discount in lieu thereof, on such purchases.

Thereafter, on October 3, 1960, Respondent and counsel supporting the complaint herein entered into an Agreement Containing Consent Order To Cease And Desist, which was approved by the Director and the Associate Director of the Commission's Bureau of Litigation, and thereafter, on October 4, 1960, submitted to the Hearing Examiner for consideration.

The agreement identifies Respondent Alturas Packing Company, Incorporated, as a Florida corporation, with its office and principal place of business located at Bartow, Florida.

Respondent admits all the jurisdictional facts alleged in the complaint, and agrees that the record may be taken as if findings of jurisdictional facts had been duly made in accordance with such allegations.

Respondent waives any further procedure before the Hearing Examiner and the Commission; the making of findings of fact and conclusions of law; and all of the rights it may have to challenge or contest the validity of the order to cease and desist entered in accordance with the agreement. All parties agree that the record on which the initial decision and the decision of the Commission shall be based shall consist solely of the complaint and the agreement; that the order to cease and desist, as contained in the agreement, when it shall have become a part of the decision of the Commission, shall have the same force and effect as if entered after a full hearing, and may be altered, modified or set aside in the manner provided for other orders; that the complaint herein may be used in construing the terms of said order; and that the agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by Respondent that it has violated the law as alleged in the complaint.

After consideration of the allegations of the complaint, and the provisions of the agreement and the proposed order, the Hearing Examiner is of the opinion that such order constitutes a satisfactory disposition of this proceeding. Accordingly, in consonance with the terms of the aforesaid agreement, the Hearing Examiner accepts the Agreement Containing Consent Order To Cease And Desist, finds that the Commission has jurisdiction over the Respondent and over its acts and practices as alleged in the complaint; and finds that this proceeding is in the public interest. Therefore,

It is ordered, That the Respondent, Alturas Packing Company, Incorporated, a corporation, and its officers, agents, representatives and employees, directly or through any corporate or other device, in connection with the sale of citrus fruit or fruit products in commerce, as "commerce" is defined in the aforesaid Clayton Act, do forthwith cease and desist from:

Paying, granting, or allowing, directly or indirectly, to any buyer, or to anyone acting for or in behalf of or who is subject to the direct or indirect control of such buyer, anything of value as a commission, brokerage, or other compensation, or any allowance or dis-

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count in lieu thereof, upon or in connection with any sale of citrus fruit or fruit products to such buyer for his own account.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION AND ORDER TO FILE REPORT OF COMPLIANCE

Pursuant to Section 3.21 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, the initial decision of the hearing examiner shall, on the 19th day of May 1961, become the decision of the Commission; and, accordingly: