

1431

Complaint

vidually and as officers of said corporation, shall, within sixty (60) days after service upon them of this order, file with the Commission a report in writing, setting forth in detail the manner and form in which they have complied with the order to cease and desist.

IN THE MATTER OF

PRIDE O' TEXAS CITRUS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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

OF THE CLAYTON ACT

Docket 8359. Complaint, Apr. 17, 1961—Decision, Dec. 27, 1961

Consent order requiring packers of citrus fruit in Mission, Tex., selling its products both through brokers and direct to customers, to cease paying brokerage or discounts in lieu thereof to direct buyers purchasing 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 Pride O'Texas Citrus Association, Inc., is a corporation organized, existing and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Texas, with its office and principal place of business located at Mission, Texas, with mailing address as Post Office Box 273, Mission, Texas.

PAR. 2. Respondent is now and since October 1, 1959 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 13½ 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 Texas 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 Texas, 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 hereinabove 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).

Messrs. Cecil G. Miles and Basil J. Mezines for the Commission.

Ewers, Toothaker, Ewers, Elick, Jones and Abbott, by Mr. Scott Toothaker and Mr. O. C. Hamilton, Jr., McAllen, Tex., for respondents.

INITIAL DECISION BY HERMAN TOCKER, HEARING EXAMINER

In a complaint issued April 17, 1961, the Federal Trade Commission charged respondent Pride O'Texas Citrus Association, Inc. (a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Texas and engaged in business in the City of Mission, Texas), with having violated Section 2(c) of the Clayton Act, as amended, by paying, granting or allowing to some but not all brokers buying for their own account and direct buyers a commission, brokerage or other compensation, or an allowance or discount in lieu thereof, in the course of its sales and distribution of citrus fruits in commerce.

After the issuance of the complaint, respondent, by its president, with the advice and agreement of its attorneys, and counsel supporting the complaint entered into an agreement providing for the issuance of a consent order to cease and desist, thus disposing of all the issues in this proceeding.

1439

Order

In the agreement it is expressly provided that the signing thereof is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by the respondent that it has violated the law as in the complaint alleged.

By the terms of the agreement, the respondent admits all the jurisdictional facts alleged in the complaint and agrees that the record herein may be taken as if the Commission had made findings of jurisdictional facts in accordance with the allegations.

By the agreement, the respondent expressly waives any further procedural steps before the Hearing Examiner and the Commission, the making of findings of fact or conclusions of law, and all rights it may have to challenge or contest the validity of the order to cease and desist to be entered in accordance therewith.

Respondent further agrees that the order to cease and desist, to be issued in accordance with the agreement, shall have the same force and effect as if made after a full hearing.

It is further provided in said agreement that the same, together with the complaint, shall constitute the entire record herein and that the complaint herein may be used in construing the terms of the order to be issued pursuant to said agreement and that such order may be altered, modified or set aside in the manner prescribed by the statute for orders of the Commission.

The Hearing Examiner has considered the agreement and the order therein contained, and, it appearing that said agreement and order provide for an appropriate disposition of this proceeding, the same is hereby accepted and shall be filed upon becoming part of the Commission's decision in accordance with Sections 3.21 and 3.25 of the Rules of Practice applicable to this case.

Now, in consonance with the terms thereof, the Hearing Examiner finds that the Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction of the subject matter of this proceeding and of the respondent named herein, and that this proceeding is in the interest of the public, and issues the following order:

ORDER

It is ordered. That the respondent, Pride O'Texas Citrus Association, Inc., 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

Complaint

59 F.T.C.

or indirect control of such buyer, anything of value as a commission, brokerage, or other compensation, or any allowance or discount 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, published May 6, 1955, as amended, the initial decision of the Hearing Examiner shall, on the 27th day of December, 1961 become the decision of the Commission; and, accordingly:

It is ordered, That respondent herein shall, within sixty (60) days after service upon it of this order, file with the Commission a report in writing, setting forth in detail the manner and form in which it has complied with the order to cease and desist.