

19. Do you know of any Bill in force in any other country which the merchants consider satisfactory? The Canadian Bill, I am told, is regarded as a satisfactory measure?—No, I do not. I have just seen a copy of the Canadian Bill, but I did not read it.

20. Then, as to the question of costs in the event of the arbitration you referred to, you say the loser should pay the costs. You would be quite prepared to leave that to the arbitration to decide?—Yes.

21. *Mr. Bollard.*] I should like to ask if the amendments suggested in this Bill, if carried into effect, would, in your opinion, be effectual with regard to the prevention of weeds being circulated in seeds?—Well, I would say No. The Bill has not aimed at preventing the sale of weeds. The Bill provides that if you mark them “uncleaned” seeds you can sell anything you like.

22. But you made certain suggestions which, if carried out, you think would make the Bill effectual?—No. We do not say it would absolutely prevent the sale of noxious weeds in seed, but we say it would make it much more workable than the measure is now, and equal to both sides. At present it is a very one-sided Bill. The Bill especially allows the sale of unclean seeds.

23. According to the percentage?—No; with any percentage.

24. *Mr. Okey.*] You said that the responsibility should be on the grower. Do you think anything could be done in the way of inspecting the place where the seed is grown? The Government at present have a considerable number of Inspectors of different kinds. Do you think a system of inspection could be carried out—that is, you want to put the responsibility on the grower, and not on the merchant?—Responsibility of what?

25. The responsibility of this Act and the impure seed. I take it you buy your seeds from the grower to a great extent?—Yes.

26. Do you think anything could be done in the way of inspection?—We have not considered that point. That is a very important point—the sale of seed by the grower to the merchant. That is a matter that is not dealt with in this Bill.

27. But do you think something like that could not be done? This Bill is almost impossible in some points?—The Bill in its present form is absolutely impossible; but I do not know that any good would result from inspection of plots. If you are going to hamper the farmer by the inspection of his plots you are going to make him say, “I am not going to bother about growing that clover; I will grow something else which will give me less concern”; and the machinery in the Dominion now is of such a character that I have no hesitation in saying that the seed, no matter how bad it is when grown, can be made into good seed. We have got machinery that will clean it better than any machinery in the world.

28. In regard to the sale of lots under 5 cwt.—that is almost impossible with small farmers. There are a number of farmers who do not buy 5 cwt. of seed?—Then, is it worth while for the small farmer who does not buy 5 cwt. of seed to have the right of putting the merchant to all this trouble and annoyance, and perhaps a prosecution and an injustice, for such small parcels of less than 5 cwt.?

29. The object of the Bill is to get the merchant to have his seed in this condition before it is sent out. All the seed you have in your store, I take it, would stand the certificate?—Probably it would; but then the trader does not want to be laid open, when the seed is delivered perhaps two or three hundred miles away in the backblocks to have a notice sent down to him to say that the farmer is going to have a sample drawn to submit to the Biologist. How could the merchant send a man up there, and why should he be asked to trust the statement of the farmer that the samples are from the same seed that he sent?

30. *Mr. Witty.*] With regard to the retailers, while it is very often that in the small lots there are more weeds than in the large lots, why should not the small farmer be protected just as much as the large one? In answer to Mr. Okey you said he was not worth bothering about?—No, I did not say that. I say, is it worth while inflicting such hardship upon the merchant for the sake of a man who only buys, as the Bill provides, 5 lb. of seed? The thing seems ridiculous. We therefore put the suggestion of 5 cwt. It may be possible to make it less, but to make it 5 lb. is unreasonable.

31. If you had 5 cwt. of turnip-seed you could sow 1,000 acres, and you could sow an enormous quantity of weeds in that?—We do not mind what the weight is so long as the sampling is done before the seed leaves the warehouse. We object to the merchant being called upon to either send a man a hundred or two hundred miles into the country to see the samples are drawn properly or trust to the farmer.

32. With regard to the 5 lb., if the merchant has got his bins of seed, suppose a man wants a mixture of, say, half a dozen different sorts in the 5 lb., the merchant knows what he is selling in each of those pounds, and there is no difficulty in giving a warranty, and there would be an estimate of each on the warranty form?—He could give the certificate, but we say that in the case of mixed seeds the farmer should not have the right of drawing the samples after the seed has been mixed. Let him draw the samples before the seeds are mixed. What assurance would the trader have that that mixed seed was in the same condition when the samples were drawn as when the seed was mixed?

33. But if it did not leave the store as you suggest, there would be no mixing for the farmer?—Supposing there were five lots in the mixture, you may have five lots condemned instead of one lot.

34. Supposing a man wanted 5 lb. to sow a little plot, and two kinds of clover and ox-eye, rye-grass and Italian rye: from each of your bins you would know you were selling seeds of a certain warranty?—Yes.