

12. Do you not think it would be a good thing if the seeds of certain classes were subject to germination tests?—A great many farmers test the germination of seeds for themselves. It is a comparatively simple matter in turnips and clover, but if you imposed germination tests I think you would find the machinery for settling a dispute would be a complicated one.

13. With this Bill as it is suggested should be amended by you, do you think it would be an improvement on things as at present exist?—Yes, I do.

14. With the alteration as suggested by Mr. Shirtcliffe and yourself?—Yes, I think it would be a good Bill, and help to check any irregularities. Of course, after all, the great safeguard for the farmer is to deal with the honest merchant, and the great safeguard for the merchant is to see that his goods are up to the proper standard if he wants to keep his trade.

15. *Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie.*] Is it not a fact that the less scrupulous man will sell a class of seed, perhaps old seeds mixed up at a lower quotation, and then he gives the decent seed-merchant a lot of trouble?—That is true, but, as a matter of fact, the farmer pretty soon finds out the man who plays that trick, and takes care to avoid him the next time.

16. *Mr. Okey.*] Mr. Hall tried to get some information in regard to dealings between grower and merchant. Can you give us any information on that point? There seems to be nothing to stop the farmers dealing with one another, and what we want to do is to stop the sale of impure seed which seems to continue by transactions between individual farmers?—There is nothing in this Bill to prevent a man selling unclean seed, providing he labels it "unclean." There is section 12, I think, which covers it. You would have to proceed against him under the Noxious Weeds Act.

17. *Mr. Witty.*] Do you not think there should be something to prevent one farmer selling dirty seed to another—the weeds are disseminated throughout the country by one farmer buying from another?—There is a great deal of that done, and unless you can prevent the farmer selling the dirty seeds under the Noxious Weeds Act, which I think you can, there is nothing to stop it.

18. You spoke of the cost if you had to invoice so many different seeds—you would have to get more clerical assistance; but, seeing that the farmer is safeguarded by that he should not object to pay for it, because it would pay him to know he has pure seeds?—Yes, if it was going to affect him, but I honestly think that the quality of the seed sold in New Zealand, as regards purity and germination, is very much better to-day than it was a few years ago, and farmers are more particular as to the class of seeds they order.

19. You complain of the words "locality" and "country" in the Bill, but there is the word "unknown" included?—There is no doubt it is a safeguard. I think if you had the words "colonial" or "imported" that that would be quite sufficient.

20. Is it not a fact that some farmers buy the cleanings from the cleaning-machines?—I have never sold any to them. We fire one of our engines with it.

21. It should be compulsory that all those noxious weeds should be burnt or crushed?—We use it for driving our cleaning-machine.

22. I know of cases where cleanings have been bought and taken on to Crown lands and thrown to the four winds of heaven?—Yes, I think that is so.

23. Do you think there should be something in the Bill providing for such cleanings to be destroyed?—Yes.

24. *Mr. Buchanan.*] Clause 6 states, "The buyer of any seeds sold for sowing may, at any time within seven days after the receipt thereof, take, in the presence of two witnesses, a sample of such seed and forward it to the Biologist of the Department of Agriculture, Commerce, and Tourists, at Wellington, for the purpose of testing." You are stationed at Invercargill?—Yes.

25. Do you think there would be delay in having it sent to Wellington?—Yes, there would be. The only safeguard we would have is if our suggestion is accepted that the farmer must not sow the seed until he has got the Biologist's report.

26. The difficulty may be got over by eliminating the word "Wellington," and stating simply "Department." The Biologist may be in Invercargill?—Or he may have a deputy there.

27. *Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie.*] Mr. Okey pointed out that this Bill does not prevent impure seed being sold, to which you replied, quite correctly, that that is the case. Would you suggest that anything more drastic than is put in the Bill should be submitted to Parliament?—Well, I would really hesitate before offering a suggestion of that sort. I think that something, perhaps in the nature of making it an offence to do what Mr. Witty says has been done in regard to sending weeds or rubbish out to be sown on Crown lands, would be wise—it ought to be put a stop to; but whether the farmer should be prevented from buying dirty seeds from his neighbour, from the seed trade point of view it would obviously be the best thing that could be done.

28. The point is that this will all be published, and it may be said, I suppose, that because we do not prevent that being done that the Bill might be largely of no value, and therefore there would be no improvement; but you do not take that view of it?—No, I do not. I think the Bill would be an improvement in this respect, that the farmer who wants to buy clean seed and arranges with the merchant has protection to see that he gets clean seed. The farmer could still buy dirty seed if he wishes to.

29. *Mr. Witty.*] Would it not be an improvement to have a clause in the Bill providing that a farmer could be got at where it was shown that he knowingly sold dirty seed in a district?—You get that under the Noxious Weeds Act.

Suggestions re Seed Sale Control Bill.

Clause 1. Does the Bill refer to sowing in New Zealand only, or does it include seed for export? It should apply only to internal trade. Exporters have to be guided by the regulations in force in the importing countries.

Clause 3. The Bill should not apply to transactions between merchants or traders.