

as regards that transaction. There is an enormous business done between merchants, but the seed is not sold for sowing in those transactions. The seed is sold between merchants, and the buyer eventually sells to another merchant, and finally it is sold to the farmer, and the final seller should be bound by the Act.

59. Now, when you make purchases of seed, what is the usual course: do you take a sample and buy on a guarantee from the farmer that the seed would be equal to that sample, or how?—We do not buy from the farmers ourselves, and I would like some other member of the deputation who knows more about that business to answer. We ourselves buy from the merchants mostly, and therefore we buy on sample.

60. You have no power of tracing where that seed comes from that you get from merchants?—No, not as a rule.

61. Then why should you make the farmer responsible?—I do not follow you.

62. If you are going to buy from the merchant you take a sample from the merchant and have a proper understanding with that merchant that the bulk of the seed will be equal to the sample?—Yes. We have not suggested that there should be any restriction placed upon the farmer selling to the merchant. The Bill does not deal with it in any shape or form, and I have not suggested that there should be any restriction of that kind. I quite agree that the more freely you allow the farmer to deal with the merchant the better for both parties. The farmer can look after his own end of the transaction, and I have no doubt the merchant can do likewise.

63. *Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie.*] Of course, you know the object of this Bill is to secure better seed to the farmer?—Yes.

64. And it is within your experience that a good deal of impure seed is sometimes sold in this country, is it not?—Well, that is a matter of degree. I suppose there are impure seeds sold, but I think the trade has improved wonderfully during the last ten years. I think the seeds to-day are far and away an improvement upon the seeds that we used to sell ten years ago.

65. But is not the honest seed-merchant sometimes at a very heavy disadvantage in contending with those who are not really so particular?—That is so. They have had experience of that kind, but I think that sort of thing has disappeared to a very large extent.

66. With regard to mixing old seeds, you have known that to be carried on?—Yes, I have known of that.

67. Seeds that are very often infertile?—Yes.

68. We have not touched yet upon the methods of cultivation of the seeds or the germination of seeds in this Act. Does not the merchant to a certain extent get out of the responsibility now in regard to the seeds?—There is a clause now that the merchant gives no guarantee, and that if the farmer is not satisfied he must return the seeds.

69. You do not depend much upon that?—We have to depend upon our reputation.

70. You have not been watching the legislation carried on and in force in other countries—Europe, America, and Canada?—No, I cannot say I have.

71. You are probably aware there has been a very great deal done in those countries?—No, really I am in the dark as to what has been done.

72. Now, coming to the Bill itself, of course it only applies to the sale of seeds to farmers within New Zealand?—Yes.

73. You ask that there should be no restriction between trader and trader?—Yes.

74. The intention of the Bill is to cover that?—Yes.

75. Clause 3 says, "All seed sold shall for the purposes of this Act be deemed to be sold for sowing unless the vendor and purchaser agree at the time of sale that the seed is sold for some purpose other than sowing"?—We took it that that did not cover that suggestion.

76. Well, that is the intention?—I am glad.

77. The question has been put by others regarding the minimum quantity—you thought it should be 5 cwt.?—Yes, so long as the sample is drawn before delivery. I still think 5 lb. is too small a quantity.

78. I think I might as well put on record that in Dakota and in Maine it is for everything over 1 lb., and in Hungary and Austria it is everything over 2 lb.?—Labour is cheap there.

79. In regard to locality and country, the Bill, in my mind, seems to cover that by writing simply "Unknown"?—You might as well have the word printed in the certificate at once.

80. You say it is contended that it is immaterial as to the purity, but is it not very material regarding the quality of the seeds to know the country from whence they come?—No, I do not think so.

81. Is it not a fact that seed grown in England is much more carefully grown—take, for instance, clover or turnip seeds? Have you ever been on any of the trial grounds in England?—Yes.

82. You have seen the care taken there?—I do not think the seed grown on the Continent or in America, speaking broadly and not with reference to any particular seeds, that there is any difference between them, and I say so because we buy largely on germination guarantees, and we have the highest guarantees possible from the Continent. Then, again, if the seed is not as pure as English seed—and I do not say it is not—we have the machinery here that will make it better.

83. The point I wish to bring out is the question of quality?—Do you mean germination or purity?

84. Quality, for instance, it is true you may get your high germination for your turnips, but they may not have gone through the proper process whereby you secure a continuation of the high strain. Is it not a fact that turnip-seed grown in England are more reliable?—I have no experience of turnips on the Continent. I would probably have to say you are right, because I do not think any of us have had experience of Continental turnips.

85. Have you ever seen white clover grown on the trial grounds in America and that grown in England?—No, I cannot say I have.