

the sale of seeds, who is entitled to the immunity provided by this subsection, should, notwithstanding that the section declares him to be immune and not liable to conviction, be mulcted in the case of conviction, while the principal, when his name is disclosed by the agent as a condition precedent to his statutory innocence being established, is also prosecuted. Now, I say in all seriousness and candour that it is an unheard-of proposition, that the innocent receiver of stolen goods, not knowing them to have been stolen, should be liable to prosecution as well as the thief. If it were only to save the innocent dealer, who does not open the package, who does not know the state of the seed, and who had no reason to believe that the seed did not comply with the provisions of the Act, and discloses the name of the person from whom he purchased the seed, and the date and the place of the sale, I say the Bill should be altered. If only for the purpose of protecting from prosecution a man of that character, a man who is innocent according to the spirit of the Act, it would be well for the minister to hesitate before pressing this Bill through the House. I sincerely trust the hon. minister will give his best consideration to the motion of my hon. friend from Brantford (Mr. Cockshutt), if not upon all the grounds suggested by him, upon general grounds, and in order that we may have a useful and workable piece of legislation which would really protect the class of people it is intended to.

Mr. ELSON. Representing a purely agricultural constituency and being a practical farmer myself, I have taken a very deep interest indeed in the Bill introduced by my hon. friend regarding the inspection and sale of clover and other seeds, and I desire to compliment the hon. gentleman for what I believe is an honest effort on his part to bring about such legislation as will enable our farmers to obtain clean and pure seeds. I fear, however, that the provisions of this Bill will not have the desired effect, either as regards the farmers or the merchants, and certainly not that which the hon. minister himself desires. I am convinced that if it should become law, it will decrease the price of clover seeds which the farmers have to sell and increase the price to those farmers who have to buy it, and who are the only members of our community who would after all require to purchase. Let me illustrate my argument. Let us take say four farmers who have each ten bushels of clover seed to sell. The Bill provides that a farmer may sell his seed to another farmer without coming under the provisions of this measure; but if a farmer should have to go around among his neighbours and peddle his seed, that would not be only a humiliating position for him to occupy, but he would soon find that he would not get much sale for it. I fail to see how we can very well dispense with the services of the middle man or the merchant in the sale of

our seeds. Then when farmer No. 1 brings his ten bushels of seed to the merchant, the merchant, with his keen eye or glass, finds that it contains noxious seeds, and he says: There is an inspection law at present and this seed will not stand inspection and grade as No. 1, consequently I can only give you a low price for it. The farmer, who has no other recourse, must take the price offered. When farmer No. 2 comes with his ten bushels, the merchant says to him: Your seed is not quite so good as that which I have just got, because it contains a quantity of oxeye daisy, mustard and other bad seeds, and consequently I can only give you a low price. The farmer, of course, must take the price offered, and his seed is dumped into the same bin with that of farmer No. 1. Then comes along farmer No. 3, and the merchant says to him: Your seed contains a certain proportion of noxious seed, and I can only give you a low price. The farmer again cannot help himself, and sells at the price offered, and the merchant dumps No. 3 seed into the same bin with the others. Then farmer No. 4 appears on the scene, and his ten bushels are fairly good seed. The merchant says: I cannot detect very much noxious seed in your ten bushels and I will give you a fairly good price, and he buys it and dumps that also into the same bin. So that there are forty bushels in the same bin. Then the inspector comes along, dips out a little of the seed from the bin, examines it and grades it as No. 1. When a purchaser comes to buy some clover seed, the merchant says to him: I have here a bin graded No. 1 by the government inspector, but I must charge a big price for it; but the purchaser, of course, can do nothing else but buy, and he gets his portion from the top. Another purchaser comes, and another, and so on. But at each sale the merchant has to dip deeper into the bin; and according as the quantity in the bin decreases, the quality of the seed becomes worse. But it has all been graded as No. 1, and the last purchaser pays the same price as the first. So that the farmer who sells has to take a low price, whereas those who buy have to pay a big price, and the profit is to the merchant, who, of course, in view of the uncertainties and difficulties with which the law surrounds him, is entitled to a fairly good price in order to enable him to handle the goods at all. Any legislation which turns against the interests of the farmer should be most carefully considered. If the Minister of Agriculture could devise some means for winnowing out the noxious seeds from the good, thereby giving to the farmer the clean seed on the one hand and the noxious weed seed on the other. There could be no objection to this measure, but so far, we have no machine which will accomplish that. But if the hon. minister could succeed in obtaining such a machine and have it put upon the market, he would certainly be rendering greater service to the

Mr. BOYCE.