

owners of the property, and for one, I congratulate the government on the step that they have taken in proposing to place such a bill as this on the statute-book to prevent the importation of the pest.

Hon. Mr. ALMON—I cordially support this measure. It is a left-handed way of introducing protection. If he could discover a similar pest in all the articles we import from the United States and introduce legislation of this protective character, I should be very happy to give it my support. I say this on my own account, not being represented by any one on this side of the House.

Hon. Mr. ALLAN—I am heartily glad that the government have introduced this bill, for the evil is one which threatens very important consequences to the fruit industry of this country. Nearly a year ago I ventured to draw the attention of the government of Ontario to what was then going on in the introduction of this insect and the extent in which it was spreading in the Niagara peninsula, and the answer I received then was that although they had power to compel owners to destroy trees affected with black knot and one or two other diseases, they did not consider they had the power to compel the owners of the orchards affected by this San José scale to destroy the trees or to remunerate the owners in any way if the trees were destroyed; but at the close of the last session of the Ontario legislature I understand they did pass a bill. Of course we are liable to still further trouble from the pest by the introduction of stock from the infected districts of the United States. Owing to the frightful rapidity with which this San José scale multiplies it would very soon seriously affect most of the fruit growing portions of the country if steps are not taken to prevent its introduction. I am told that it not only affects fruit trees, but that it also affects ornamental trees.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I am altogether in accord with the measure and I think parliament should expedite its passage by every means in its power. There is just one clause of the bill which I do not understand—the 6th. That provides :

6. The Governor in Council may from time to time, notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, permit the importation from any country or place to which this Act applies, of such nursery stock as is required for scientific purposes.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I suppose that is with a view to finding the best remedy for the pest.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I do not know but there may be an element of danger in that. Unfortunately, it is not necessary to go to foreign countries for specimens of trees affected by the San José scale. If you open the door for the importation of trees for scientific purposes, it may be the means of introducing more of the pest into the country. I can see no necessity for admitting trees or shrubs in that way. However, there may be some good reason for the clause, that I do not appreciate, or have not yet heard of. The Department of Agriculture have very eminent and capable men as their advisers, and it may be all right. I do not know that this pest has extended beyond the province of Ontario. I have not heard of it yet in Prince Edward Island, and I do not think it has yet reached the maritime provinces. I suppose for local measures of protection dependence will have to be placed on the local legislatures. I hope they will not wait until the pest is amongst them before taking protective steps. I suppose this parliament can do nothing beyond preventing the importation.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Attention having been called to the subject I have no doubt the provinces will take good care to adopt any measures of prevention that may be practicable.

The motion was agreed to, and the bill was read the second time at length at the table, and read the third time and passed.

DELAYED RETURNS.

INQUIRY.

Hon. Mr. PERLEY—I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Justice about what time I may expect the returns I asked for a month ago. I had a notice on the paper of the question I wished to put, but the hon. gentleman said if I asked for the papers to be brought down the same object would be accomplished. It is a month now, and the papers have not been laid on the Table.

Hon. Mr. MILLS—To what papers does the hon. gentleman refer?