

In this process of cleaning considerable good seed is either fanned or screened out, together with the weed seeds, chaff, sand and other inert matter. These screenings, which contain a quantity of good seed, are usually mixed and again put through a cleaner fitted with less exacting screens. The lower grades of seed thus obtained are sold wholesale and are much in demand by local dealers.

In referring to the less progressive agricultural districts, where these screenings are sold, the manager of one of the largest Canadian seed firms remarked: "Those people are a bonanza." There is the dumping ground for our screenings, but we would rather sell them our best seed.

*Competition.*—Competition in the seed trade has been, and still is, too largely confined to prices. For this condition the seedsmen are not wholly to blame. As long as farmers continue to demand cheap seeds, without regard to quality, worthless low grades will be offered. Competition among local dealers in towns and villages induces them to buy the cheaper grades of seed for their trade. They know that most farmers, like themselves, are incapable of estimating the real value of the sample or of detecting noxious impurities. There are few articles in the commerce of agriculture in which the real worth is so difficult to judge from appearance as grass, clover, and other small seeds. Fair competition in the trade in grass and clover seed is practically impossible except when they are sold according to fixed standards of quality or under a definite guarantee based upon a standard method of analysis.

*Reputation of seed firms.*—Seed firms, who have fitted their establishments with seed cleaning machinery seldom offer the lower grades and screenings of seeds in their retail trade. That would injure their reputation. Due credit has not been given to the enterprising and reliable seedsmen who have had so large a share in the development of Canadian agriculture. A competent seedsmen, in addition to being a shrewd business man, must be a thorough agriculturist and be able to edit a catalogue that will not only represent his business, but also serve as a text book for the amateur florist, gardener, or even farmer. The business of reliable seedsmen is, however, brought into competition with less competent and less scrupulous merchants and local dealers. A great deal of the retail trade has gradually been passing from firms who devote all their attention to seeds, into the hands of men who have but a limited knowledge of seeds and whose main business is of an entirely different character.

In the older parts of Canada, farmers have an opportunity to get acquainted with the comparative reliability of the different seed firms; and in consequence, the businesses of the high class firms have been steadily developing while that of the firms of questionable reputation has been falling off with the better class of seed consumers. Similar results have occurred in the older and thickly populated European countries where seed firms are well distributed throughout agricultural districts. The business of some of the older seed firms in Great Britain is strictly confined to retail trade. It is reasonable to expect that in the development of the seed trade in Canada conditions would become properly adjusted to the carrying of it on in such a way, as to supply the farmers with pure sound seed and to leave fair profits for all engaged in it.

*About Guarantee.*—Canadian seedsmen make use of a non warranty clause which is usually printed in their catalogues, in their blank order sheets, and attached to or enclosed with shipments of seed. These non-warranty clauses vary slightly, but they are all intended to shield the vendor from responsibility. Samples of these non-warranty clauses are herewith given:—

*"Conditions of Sale.*—We take every precaution to supply reliable seeds, but give no warranty, expressed or implied, as to description, quality, growth, productiveness, or any other matter of any seeds we send out, and we wish it to be distinctly understood that we will not be in any way liable for any loss arising from any failure thereof or responsible in any way for the crop. All goods bought from us must be accepted on these conditions."

*About Warranting.*—We give no warranty, expressed or implied, as to the description, quality, productiveness, or any other matter of any seeds, bulbs or plants we send out, and will not in any way be responsible for the crop. If the purchaser does not accept the goods on these terms they are at once to be returned."