

do I think that, if the tables were turned, the hon. gentleman would consider that an objection.

Mr. COCHRANE. I understood the minister to tell us in his brief remarks in introducing this subject, that Mr. McKinnon's father was the owner of a fruit farm, and that this young man had been brought up on a fruit farm. But if the hon. gentleman is correct in his statement now, he was not on the farm at all and did not know anything about fruit.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Does the hon. gentleman say his father does not own a fruit farm?

Mr. COCHRANE. He was a school inspector up to the last five or six years, and never had a fruit farm at all; and when his father bought the fruit farm this young man was in college. I would like to ask the minister how a man, however intellectually bright he may be, but knows nothing about fruit, can all at once develop into such an expert.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I cannot tell the hon. gentleman when his father bought the farm.

Mr. COCHRANE. Then you should not have told us that he was brought up on a fruit farm, if you did not know it.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. He was on a fruit farm when I first heard of him, and I knew his father owned a fruit farm, and I was informed by the late Speaker of this House, the Hon. Thos. Bain, that he had a fruit farm, and that the son had lived on a fruit farm, and was as thoroughly equipped with a knowledge of fruit-growing as his father was. His father is to-day a member of the Fruit Grower's Association, and has been frequently in communication with my department in regard to the fruit interests of the Niagara district.

Mr. INGRAM. I suppose the hon. gentleman has had several conversations with this young man as to his qualifications. Doubtless he has discussed the peach question with him. I had been at a loss for some time back to understand where the hon. gentleman got his information with respect to peaches; I never knew before that peaches had stems on them until I heard the hon. gentleman make that remark. Now if Mr. McKinnon gave him that information, I have grave doubts as to his qualifications. Did the hon. gentleman say that Mr. McKinnon is permanently appointed as an inspector?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. He has been permanently appointed for this purpose up to the present time.

Mr. INGRAM. Does that mean for the year round?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Yes.

Hon. Mr. FISHER.

Mr. INGRAM. When a Bill was passing through this House last session the hon. gentleman said it was not his intention to appoint permanent inspectors. The hon. gentleman was asked: Would these inspectors be only temporarily employed during the fruit season, and he answered, Yes. How does it come that the hon. gentleman has changed his policy since then?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I have not looked up what explanation I gave last year when this Bill was up, but I know I had in contemplation the appointment of several inspectors by the year, as well as a temporary one.

Mr. HENDERSON. I have some slight knowledge of Mr. McKinnon's father, whom I have known for the past 25 or 30 years. I also know something of a cousin of his who tried to supplant me in the House of Commons a year or two ago, and this gentleman's father was very active in assisting him to get left at home. But it is rather a serious question, whether this appointment is proper or not. Mr. McKinnon, senior, I believe, is a member of a fruit association, and is an important fruit grower. I have no desire to minimize his position in that respect; he has taken an active interest in that industry, and I presume as a shipper and all that. Still I think it is a question whether it is proper that Mr. McKinnon's son should be over the entire department that controls the inspection of the fruit. It would be a very difficult matter indeed, no matter how honourable the son was, to avoid giving a preference. I think there will be a feeling amongst other shippers that they will be handicapped to some extent by the fact that Mr. McKinnon's son is in a position to benefit him at the expense of others. Of course it is unfortunate that this gentleman's father is a candidate at the present time in the Niagara district, and I would not for a moment suggest that his influence would be used there; but I do say there will be a strong supposition that his influence will be used to the detriment of a large number of people who are engaged in that industry. I think the minister might seriously consider whether the fact of the father's connection with the Fruit Grower's Association, and the other fact of the son's connection with the inspection, will be regarded as quite satisfactory by the fruit growers of the province. I fear that it will destroy confidence very much in a proper inspection.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I think practically that almost everybody whose name was suggested as an inspector in connection with this Bill had some personal or business relations with fruit shippers and would be, therefore, open to any such accusation, but I have not the slightest idea that there is any such feeling of alarm of Mr. McKinnon, jr. doing anything in connection with his official position which would