

The New Seed Control Act.

The Bill for the control of the seed-grain business in Canada has passed the House of Commons, but has yet to run the gauntlet of the Senate. In order that the merit and working of the measure might be more clearly understood, the following outline is given of its provisions:

The object of the "Bill respecting the Inspection and Sale of Seeds," is to supplement educational work, carried on through the media of the agricultural press, farmers' institutes, bulletins, etc., by providing purchasers of seeds with the means for safeguarding themselves against the introduction on their farms of twenty-three of what are generally conceded to be the most noxious Canadian weeds. Clause 3.—The names of any of fourteen of those weeds (wild mustard, tumbling mustard, hare's-ear mustard, ball mustard, field pennycress, wild oats, bindweed, perennial sow thistle, ragweed, great ragweed, purple cockle, cow cockle, orange hawkweed or paint brush, ergot of rye) must be plainly written either on the bag itself, or on a label attached to the bag, if the seeds of those weeds are present in cereal grain, grass, clover, or forage plant seeds that are sold or offered for sale for seeding, by any seed merchant, or by any farmer, except when the farmer sells and delivers the seed on his own premises to a neighbor who will use the seed himself, in which case it is assumed that the purchaser, although he may be unable to recognize the weed seeds, has the means of knowing or obtaining information about the condition, in respect to weeds, of the farm from which he obtained such seed.

The provisions of the Bill are made to apply only when the article is sold for the purpose of seeding. They do not apply to transactions in grain to be used for food purposes, or to any seed sold to seed merchants to be re-cleaned.

Under the present conditions of the seed trade it has been found that the most objectionable seeds, in respect to the above-named weeds, that have been sold or offered for sale for seeding were seeds of cereal grains, and in no case has more than two species of the above-named weeds been present. An occasional lot of seed wheat has been found to contain purple cockle and great ragweed. Seed of banner oats was also found to contain both wild mustard and wild oats. In the latter case it would be necessary for the seed merchant to attach a tag to the bag of seed, giving the following information:

(Name of Merchant)(Address).....

Banner oats, containing wild oats and wild mustard.

No restrictions whatever are made in respect to labelling of packages with the names of weeds, so long as the seeds sold or offered for sale do not contain seed of any of the above-named fourteen species of weeds.

Of the fourteen weeds named in Clause 3, wild mustard, ragweed and perennial sow thistle are the only ones that have thus far been found, in the Seed Laboratory at Ottawa, in samples of timothy, alsike and red clover seed. Out of 566 samples of timothy, nineteen contained seed of perennial sow thistle; of 294 samples of alsike, seven contained seed of wild mustard; and of 569 samples of red clover, thirty-three contained seed of wild mustard, four contained seed of perennial sow thistle, and seven contained seed of ragweed, of which both the outer and inner coats had been broken off. The latter seeds were found to be non-vital, and were classed as inert matter.

It has been claimed that ox-eye daisy, white cockle and false flax should also be named in Clause 3. These weeds, however, have already become widely spread. Their seeds are small, and are frequently present in grass and clover seeds. To name them in Clause 3 would mean that about 55 per cent. of the timothy, alsike and red clover seed now handled by seed merchants would have to be labelled with the names of these weeds. For this reason, it was thought wise at this time to say (Clause 4) that timothy, alsike and red clover seed, marked "No. 1," or otherwise represented to be of first quality, must, in addition to being free from the fourteen species of weeds named in Clause 3, be free from seeds of nine other species (white cockle, night-flowering catchfly, false flax, Canada thistle, ox-eye daisy, curled dock, blue weed, ribgrass, chicory).

Clause 4 provides a standard of quality in respect to both purity and germination of timothy, alsike and red clover seeds, that are marked "No. 1," or otherwise represented to be of first quality. The clause does not require seed merchants or farmers to mark their seeds "No. 1." Such an act on their part would be absolutely optional. The clause is inserted because it is well known that there is a fair demand for good seed, of definite quality, on the part of farmers and others who are willing to pay a price commensurate with its value. It is also recognized that we have reliable Canadian seed merchants who will take the necessary care required to supply such demand. The clause is inserted to give protection to both farmers and reliable seed merchants. In respect to this clause, it should be clearly understood that the minimum standard of quality as provided therein does not represent the best obtainable quality of timothy, alsike or red clover seed as offered in the market. Although this optional standard provides for a reasonably good and pure seed, it is well known that quality in seeds of all kinds should mean a great deal more than simply purity and germination.

Clause 5.—In the practical operations of the seed trade it is well known that absolute purity in seeds is

an impossibility. The Bill is made to fully recognize that impossibility. Clause 5 makes allowance for the possibility of error or oversight in the examination of seeds. This allowance may be made more liberal during the first year of the operation of the Bill than in later years. Were it not for such allowance, one seed of wild mustard in a bushel of red clover seed would render the merchant liable under the Act.

Clause 6 applies only to timothy, alsike and red clover seed. The provisions of this clause are intended to restrict the sale for seeding in Canada of the "cleanings" or "screenings" from these seeds. Such screenings have been largely in demand in certain districts in Canada during recent years. They reach the farmers through the medium of irresponsible local seed vendors, whose main business is of an entirely different character, and who find a greater margin of profit in the sale of such seeds than they do with seeds of superior quality. Quantities of these seeds have been imported, but the greater part of them have been traced and found to be cleanings from Canadian-grown seed that is exported to foreign countries, where the guarantee system forms the basis of the seed trade. The most objectionable feature of such screenings is their content of seeds of the weeds named in the Bill.

To obtain simplicity of operation, the definition for the minimum standard was based on the proportion by number of those weed seeds named, to those of the seeds sold. From the results of investigation work in 1902, 1903 and 1904, it was found that a limit of three to one thousand would be required as a standard in order to meet the desired object, and the same was inserted in the seed Bill introduced last year. The com-



Revenge —246—.

Hackney stallion. Foaled in 1903. Bred and owned by Graham Bros., Claremont, Ont.

dition of the clover seed crop of 1904, however, provided an extreme test of this standard. Doubtless much clover was left for seed that should have been cut for hay. In consequence of the more recent information, it was thought wise to widen the standard, for the initial step in legislation, to five to one thousand, and even with this wider standard it was found that an occasional farmer's lot from the crop of last year could not be sold directly for seeding, but would have to be sold to be re-cleaned. The standard of "five to one thousand" would mean that an imperial quart of timothy seed would contain, approximately, ten thousand; of alsike seed, six thousand five hundred; of red clover seed, three thousand seeds of the weeds named in the Bill.

Sellers of seeds are justly protected against negligent or evilly-disposed seed purchasers. In case of dispute between purchaser and seller, prosecution can be made only when a representative sample of the seed in question has been submitted and tested by an official seed analyst, and such sample must be taken and enclosed in a sealed package, either in the presence of the seller, or in the presence of two non-interested witnesses, within seven days after the sale of the seed.

Tell Your Wants

TO OVER 30 000 OF CANADA'S BEST FARMERS BY ADVERTISING IN THE "WANT AND FOR SALE" COLUMN OF THE "FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE," LONDON, ONT.

Lucerne for Clay Hills.

I was much interested in your article concerning alfalfa for hay and pasture. How would lucerne do to renew old pasture in which, apparently, the natural grass is "run out?" Would it be sufficient preparation to simply cultivate the old sod and then sow the lucerne mixed with white clover, alsike and orchard grass, following the seeding with the harrow and a light application of manure, or would it be necessary to plow the old sod before seeding? The pasture is so cut up with creeks and ponds that it is difficult to get a straight score in any part of it, but the dry part is very dry, and composed chiefly of clay. Could the seeding be done with success after the spring crop is sown, during the latter part of May, and would it be an injury to allow the cattle to range over it? What would be the best mixture of seeds for ground like that, and when should the lucerne be ready for pasturing?

R. S. SUTTON.

Durham Co., Ont.

Ans.—If you can get lucerne well established on those hills, you will find them very profitable. We know of similar pasture land in Ontario Co. that has been more than doubled in value by laying down with a permanent pasture mixture containing a considerable proportion of lucerne, which, though it was gradually crowded out on the mellow soil, held the clay hills for years. We would not hope, though, for very good results from sowing lucerne on the unplowed soil. Unless you were very fortunate the weeds would be

liable to grow more or less, especially following an application of manure. Better plow, if possible, even though you have to plow round the hills instead of in a direct line over them. Short pieces can be worked to best advantage in this way. A good plan would be to fall plow, manure well in winter or spring, follow with a well-cultivated crop of corn, or, if rounds are too short, sow peas or barley or buckwheat. Cultivate after harvest to kill weeds, and disk thoroughly in the fall. If the soil is very poor, plow under the crop, and to counteract the acidity which results from turning under green crops, use a dressing of lime early the next spring. Then, next spring work up, and sow the seed as early as possible in a well-pulverized seed-bed, harrow it in. If you use a nurse crop at all, let it be a

bushel of barley per acre, and sow the grass with the grain drill. Sow liberally of grass and clover, about 25 pounds per acre of a mixture consisting of meadow fescue 5 pounds, timothy 2 pounds, orchard grass 4 pounds, red top 4 pounds, tall oat grass 2 pounds, lucerne 8 pounds, white clover 1 pound, alsike 1 pound, red clover 1 pound, yellow trefoil 1 pound. On the hard spots sow 7 or 8 pounds per acre of lucerne besides the ordinary seeding. Thick seeding is very important.

Do not pasture until the second year at least, and then lightly. Use the mowing machine to cut off any weeds that threaten to go to seed and also to keep down the more luxuriant grasses that might otherwise crowd out the slower-growing and more tender kinds.

Corn Planting.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Re your request in April 18th issue for experience of corn-growers, I prefer Saltzer's North Dakota corn, as it matures early and grows excellent fodder, and it can be grown as many as five stalks per hill without being too thick, will have lots of good ears on it, and it always sells well. I have no silo and know nothing about silage. My method of soil preparation for corn is as follows: Clover, sod manured 15 loads per acre; plowed early in spring, harrowed well, and left for two or three weeks, then disked, half lapped; harrowed, if not grassy; or culti-