

the goods he has condemned. Such being the case, the inspector should be amply qualified for his duties. We should have it provided in the Bill, or we should have at least an assurance from the minister that these inspectors will only be appointed with a view to their special qualifications.

I wish to ask the hon. minister if he has considered the very great responsibility that is being assumed by the government in passing this Act? Upon its coming into force all meats, vegetables and fruits for export must be marked or stamped by the government, in which case the government becomes responsible for the condition of these goods. If by any chance an inspector—and they are all liable to make mistakes—passes a single lot of goods with the mark of the government of Canada upon it, saying in so many words, this is good, sound food, and if it is found afterwards to be unfit for food, by reason of the inspector having neglected his duty or for some other reason, what will be the result? It appears to me that the result will be that the condemnation of that one lot of goods will carry with it the condemnation of every factory engaged in the same business in Canada, whereas under present conditions those people engaged in the trade who are best fitted for it and who are most careful that their product shall go to the market in a first-class condition are now safe from the competition of those who are not so careful as to how their products shall be sent out. In that sense it seems to me that the provisions of the Bill, if it is to become law—and there are many reasons, I am ready to admit, why it should—should be one of the most stringent character. The inspectors appointed should be such that a case of the kind I have imagined could scarcely arise, and the greatest caution should be taken in regard to their qualification and appointment.

Mr. FISHER. I sympathize with the hon. gentleman's statement, and I can assure him that I have thought of the possibilities of such an occurrence and of the responsibility that would be entailed thereby. If there were any possible way of examining men to test their special qualifications for the work of inspectors under this Bill beyond those of a veterinary inspector I would be quite ready to provide for it, but I confess I do not know what kind of examination we could require a man to pass to show that he was competent to inspect canned vegetables or canned fruit or to look after the sanitary conditions of factories. There are many such inspectors, both provincial and Dominion, and I am not aware that any of them have to pass an examination, and I am afraid that it would be difficult to frame an examination that would be a fair test. The very responsibility to which the hon. gentleman refers will cause the minister to be

careful to get men who are thoroughly competent. In my official capacity I have had something to do with appointments of this kind. In the administration of the Fruit Marks Act I have not thought of appointing as an inspector a man who was not engaged in the fruit business and competent to deal with the cases that come before him. Under this clause the inspectors must be veterinarians in good standing, but it is provided that they may have to pass a further examination by the chief veterinary inspector to show that they are qualified for this particular work. The inspection of food products is a little different from the ordinary veterinary practice, and it is because of that difference that we inserted the clause making provision for a further examination of even regularly qualified veterinary surgeons. With regard to the marking of the goods and the responsibility of the government for them, that is true to a certain extent, and it implies that the greatest care must be exercised in the choice of inspectors. As far as I am concerned, I can assure the hon. gentleman, with a full sense of that responsibility, that I shall be particularly careful to choose men with a sole eye to their qualifications. I do not think any individual can have a fair claim against the government if by any chance a mistake is made. Somewhat cognate instances of that kind have occurred, and it has always been held that provided the officers of the government do the best they know how, there is no ulterior responsibility attaching to the government. I grant that it would impair the reputation of our goods, but I venture to say that as a result of this kind of inspection our goods will obtain a higher reputation than they would without it. That has been the experience of other countries, such as the United States, Australia and New Zealand. A good many goods exported from those countries have to be and have been for years marked with a government stamp, and I have never heard of any attempt to attach responsibility to the government if on any occasion the stamp has been wrongly affixed. Every precaution should be made that the men who affix it shall be qualified, and care should be taken by general supervision to see that they do it right, but more than that, I think, neither the government nor man can undertake to do.

Mr. PORTER. I would ask if the minister has considered any further the question raised by myself when this Bill was previously before the committee as to the right of a person whose product failed to pass the inspection to appeal to any other person or tribunal than the minister.

Mr. FISHER. I looked into that question and discussed it with some who are more familiar with the law than I am, and it was thought that it would very seriously