

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I have not looked into the details of the two laws. I prefer the Dominion law, under which the delinquent may be punished without the prosecution being obliged to prove positive knowledge on his part. If the hon. gentleman disapproves of that he ought to introduce a motion to change the law, and I will be very glad to discuss it with him. I think that our law is the better, it being more direct and easier to enforce. Of course this parliament has no control over the Ontario law.

Mr. ROBINSON (Elgin). I do not rise for the purpose of changing the law but to call the attention of the minister to the fact.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I suppose that a prosecution might be taken out under either law. If a prosecution be taken out under the Dominion Act, that Act will guide the judge, but if under the Ontario Act, I suppose that he will be governed by it. I would not like to give a legal opinion, but perhaps the leader of the opposition may enlighten us.

Mr. HEYD. Have they not found beneficial effects from the fact that we have these inspectors appointed, independent of the convictions secured?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. Yes, I think I can say most positively that the shippers generally and the packers generally have appreciated this law and have, in many cases, exerted themselves loyally to carry out its provisions. But, of course, they have found difficulties in the way. Long continued practices in the trade are not done away with in a day; and, even with a perfectly loyal intention to live up to the provisions of the law, no doubt many cases have occurred where the law may have been violated. That is one reason why we have not undertaken to strictly or severely enforce the law. Where we have thought that people deliberately disregarded the law, or where—as in a very few cases—they deliberately told us that we could not enforce it, we have undertaken to show that the law was enforceable and effective.

Mr. COCHRANE. Does the hon. minister know that any of his inspectors have taken power into their own hands, and, where they found apples that were not up to the mark, have said: If you will pay so much, we will let the thing go?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I know of no such case, and if such a case were brought to my notice, the inspector would have a short shrift before dismissal. But I know the character of the inspectors, and I feel confident that not one of them is capable of such an action. I would say in general terms, before closing this general exposé—

Mr. COCHRANE. How do I understand the minister in connection with that mat-

Mr. ROBINSON (West Elgin).

ter? Do I understand him to say that if he knew of an inspector who acted like that he would dismiss him?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. If I knew of an inspector who had made a bargain with an individual whose fruit he found to be unsatisfactory, to let him off in consideration of a payment, I would dismiss him at once.

Mr. CLANCY. I wish to be quite clear as to what the minister has said concerning Mr. McKinnon, the chief inspector. I am sure that the House and the country will regard the position of Mr. McKinnon as one of great importance. Do I understand that the minister told the committee that Mr. McKinnon was a gentleman of large and ripe experience? Did he say whether Mr. McKinnon had served a time as a fruit-grower sufficient to entitle him to the confidence of the people of the country, and that, after giving up fruit culture he practiced his profession as a lawyer—in other words, that Mr. McKinnon had an equipment that would entitle him to the implicit confidence that men should have in one whose duties are so important and involve so much affecting the great trade that we hope to make so much greater than it is now? The hon. minister shakes his head. If I misunderstood him, perhaps he will explain.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Clancy) has said a great deal more than I said. Mr. McKinnon is a comparatively young man. He was brought up on a fruit farm in the Niagara district, and engaged in that work until I do not know what age. He was employed by me in my department to do certain work in preparing the fruit exhibit for the Paris Exposition. He went to Paris in connection with the fruit exhibit, and showed himself eminently qualified to attend to fruit matters. He is an educated man, with a university training, and he has also a legal education. I do not think he has ever practiced the law. He obtained his degree not very long ago—if I remember well after he returned from Paris. As I say, he is a young man. I have frequently found that young men are the most efficient officers I can get, if they have had the necessary training and education to fit them for their work. The experience I have had with Mr. McKinnon in connection with his former work and in connection with this Act, convince me that he is a most efficient officer, thoroughly well equipped for his work. It is because I believed he had the necessary qualifications that I placed him in this responsible position.

Mr. CLANCY. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will permit me to tell the rest of the story. I am far from desiring to make it appear that it is a crime to be a young man, and the hon. minister will not urge that against