

Mr. G. S. PEART, Department of Agriculture: I suppose I should make my remarks as an official of the Department of Agriculture instead of the fertilizers administration, as the latter has become extinct.

The CHAIRMAN: Use your own judgment.

Mr. PEART: We of the department are anxious that native phosphate and potash deposits in Canada be developed as soon as possible. Perhaps I had better start by explaining our experience during the war years. Canada has been short of phosphate and potash fertilizer for the last six years, but at the same time we have produced an excess of nitrogen above domestic needs. If Canada had had twenty per cent more phosphate and potash fertilizer this year it would have been sold to the farmers. They wanted it but could not get it. Down through that six-year period we had to reduce the analysis of phosphate and potash in the fertilizer in order to make it go around as best we could. It is desired that we get away as rapidly as possible from low-analysis fertilizer containing a lot of filler. We should like to get on a basis of supplying the farmer with plant food containing little if any filler.

Hon. Mr. CRERAR: What standard do you want for potash?

Mr. PEART: For example, instead of a 2-12-6 there could be supplied a 4-24-12. In that event the farmer would only have to handle half the quantity for the same amount of plant food, and his cost of plant food would come down proportionately. As to supply: This year the United States producers have just informed us that they will only supply about eighty per cent of the potash they supplied Canada with last year, which was barely seventy-five per cent of our requirements. We had to bring highly expensive potash from Germany last year, which cost the Canadian public in taxes \$80,000 on one shipment alone to Halifax for meeting maritime requirements. The position as we see it is this: Ten or fifteen years ago Canada was using approximately 300,000 tons of fertilizer. Now, we are using approximately 750,000 tons. When the quantity used was relatively small we had no trouble in importing full requirements of potash and phosphate, but now that domestic consumption—has increased greatly and is still increasing, (some of us think that it will exceed a million tons in ten years)—outside countries may not be in a position to supply us fully in the future. Speaking particularly of potash, I read a report from Washington a year or so ago which stated that the U.S.A. total reserve of potash, based on present consumption, was just eighty years. Now, eighty years passes quickly in a nation's history, and unless other supplies are found on this continent in the meantime they will soon run short. On this account the U.S.A. has already asked their own fertilizer industry to import all the potash they can instead of using potash of American production. This is the main reason for reducing the supply to Canada this year.

Hon. Mr. CRERAR: Has Germany large deposits?

Mr. PEART: I understand they have very large deposits. In respect to phosphates we now draw all our supply of rock for eastern Canada from Florida. However, during the war years and particularly last year, eastern Canada could not get enough phosphate rock from Florida to keep the superphosphate plants going to capacity. We used to make 90,000 tons of superphosphate and are now making 250,000, which requires almost three times the tonnage of phosphate rock as formerly. As I see it, it is only a matter of time when this phosphate rock supply available from outside countries will be seriously short, particularly in times of emergency. The committee might be interested to know that during the war and post war period it cost the Canadian taxpayer four and a half million dollars on import subsidies for maintaining our price ceilings on phosphate and potash fertilizers. There was no subsidy paid on