

THE SENATE

Thursday, November 8, 1951

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Acting Speaker (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

FERTILIZERS

ORDER FOR RETURN

Hon. Mr. McDonald inquired of the government:

1. What was the production in Canada, and imports into Canada for the years 1939, 1949 and 1950, for the following fertilizers:

Mixed fertilizers (solid),
Nitrogen solution,
Ammonium sulphate,
Ammonium nitrate,
Ammonium phosphate,
Cyanamide,
Superphosphate,
Natural phosphate rock,
Bone meal or bone flour,
Muriate of potash 50 per cent,
Muriate of potash 60 per cent,
Sulphate of potash.

2. What was the value per short ton of the imported fertilizers and fertilizer materials for the above mentioned years?

3. (a) What were the sales in Canada, with prices charged by leading fertilizer companies, by provinces, of fertilizer materials and mixed fertilizers for the years ended June 30, 1939-40 and 1949-50?

(b) What was the cost per ton of producing ammonium nitrate the last year it was manufactured under the jurisdiction of a government department—what was the cost for the last period for which there is a record?

4. What amount of granulated Sydney slag has been sold during the last two years? Realizing the importance of this product to the Maritimes, has the government given consideration to making funds available for the erection of a plant which could turn out finely ground slag at low cost to the farmers?

5. What progress has been made by investigation and development towards making it possible for Canada to produce her own requirements of phosphoric acid and potash since the Senate, through its Standing Committee on Natural Resources, in the 1947 session, made an enquiry into the possibility of attaining self-sufficiency in commercial fertilizer supplies for our farmers?

6. Can an estimate be given of the savings effected by the farmers of Canada through buying high grade fertilizers not requiring filler?

Hon. A. K. Hugessen: Honourable senators, as this inquiry deals with material which has to be obtained from a number of departments, I think it should stand as an Order for Return.

The inquiry was passed as an Order for Return.

COMBINES LEGISLATION

APPOINTMENT OF SENATE MEMBERS OF JOINT COMMITTEE

The Senate resumed from yesterday the adjourned debate on the motion of Hon. Mr.

Hugessen for the appointment of a joint committee of both houses of parliament to consider the interim report of the committee appointed to study combines legislation.

Hon. John T. Haig: Honourable senators, it would be very inappropriate for me to express at this time any opinion on the merits of the motion. I may deviate a little in that direction, but I quite understand that if the motion carries a joint committee of both houses will be set up and that anyone who wishes to make representations before the committee in favour of or against the proposed legislation will have an opportunity to do so. Therefore, any member who has any respect for his own judgment—to say nothing of whether anyone else respects it or not—will have to postpone expression of his views on the legislation until the committee's hearings are concluded. I presume that reports of the committee's proceedings will be printed and distributed for us to study, and as a basis for our opinions on the legislation.

But the point I wish to make is that the motion is a most peculiar one. So far as I can remember, this is the first time during my membership in the Senate when the Speech from the Throne has promised legislation, and then, suddenly, out of the blue, the government has requested parliament to appoint a joint committee of both houses to investigate the subject that is to be covered by the proposed legislation. Surely if the Speech from the Throne means anything it means a promise by the government to introduce the legislation that is forecast in the speech. I admit that because of unavoidable delays, or for other reasons, it may at times be found impossible to have legislation passed before the session ends. The government is not positively bound to see that legislation mentioned in the Speech from the Throne is passed by parliament in the current session. But it was anticipated that the combines legislation would be introduced and passed at this session. However, the minister in charge of combines legislation has announced that there have been so many requests from various people to have the matter further considered that the government has given in and recommended the appointment of a joint committee for this purpose.

Now, here is a surprising feature. The custom of having fixed prices for certain goods has been in effect, I suppose, from time immemorial—at any rate, for a long while—in this country, in Britain, in the United States and other countries; but I doubt if it has anything to do with those goods and services which influence the cost of living index. I understand that the First Minister