

Mr. BRYCE: The provincial department ought to know what they are doing and I do not see any objection to that. If we do not believe what they say, then we do not need a department of agriculture to advise us.

Mr. GARDINER: No action is taken on these matters without consulting the provincial boards. The provincial boards have represented on them, as I indicated a few moments ago, the farm organizations, the soil and crop specialists, the government experimental farms—those are federal—the agricultural colleges, which are provincial, and the fertilizer industry. They are all represented on these provincial boards.

Mr. HOMUTH: Mostly the fertilizer industry.

Mr. GARDINER: They make the recommendations and decisions. It is all very well to say that the minister does it but the minister does not do it. The minister is the administrative head of the department and their recommendations are carried out.

With regard to the farmer having no choice, let me point out that in the areas with soils requiring no nitrogen the farmer has three choices; for soils for the raising of general farm crops, there are two choices; for crops requiring more potash, there are two choices; for general farm crops requiring a little more nitrogen, there are three choices; for potatoes and root vegetables, there are four choices; for orchards, there is only one choice; for flue-cured tobacco, there are two choices; for cigar and pipe tobaccos, there are two choices. These are all set up after consultation with the board. As a matter of fact, no one else has the necessary information upon which to set up the regulations. The first basis of all this is that the boards say what they think is the proper proportion of the ingredients to be put into the fertilizer for a certain district. After having determined that, they ascertain the quantity of the ingredients available, and basing their decisions upon the nature of the soil and its requirements they say: This is the best mix that can be made for that district, and this is the quantity that is available for that district, out of the quota that has been assigned to this country. This had to be done during the war because the ingredients were in short supply, and they are still in short supply. So long as that condition obtains you cannot have all the mixtures that everyone desires to have. The boards have no other objective than to try to improve the soil in different parts of Canada so that it can produce better crops, and just as soon as every mixture

desired by the farmers is available and the ingredients to make them, I am sure that it is the desire of all of us that they be made available. There is nothing of Liberalism or Toryism in that. My hon. friends sometimes get carried away.

Mr. JACKMAN: Your own friends too.

Mr. GARDINER: I am speaking of friends on both sides of the house. The best authorities available in Canada are being utilized for the purpose of determining what is the best use that can be made of the limited quantities of fertilizer ingredients that we have.

In answer to my hon. friend who said that the member for Calgary West said that you could make all the fertilizer required in a week that could be used in this country, he did not say that. What he said was that you could make in a week all the nitrogen or nitrates that were required to be put into the mixtures that form the fertilizers. That is quite a different matter. Nitrogen is only one ingredient that goes into the fertilizer. I would suggest that we are not helping anyone; we are not helping the farmer; we are not helping the industry that makes the fertilizer; we are not helping the authorities that make the division of the fertilizer as between this and other countries; we are not helping anyone by throwing out this authority which has been held by the department during the last three or four years. On the contrary, we would be doing injury to all these different groups. But if the committee insists on throwing out the section after the explanation that has been given, there is nothing we can do about it.

Mr. CHARLTON: Would the minister suggest that any board made up of the best of government officials or farmers, whoever they may be, is capable of deciding that only certain fertilizers should be used in zones such as in my own district where there is the very lightest of sand and the very heaviest of clay?

Mr. TOWNLEY-SMITH: I have had the honour of knowing and working with a good many of the men mentioned by the minister and I would not hesitate to accept their recommendations as to the best fertilizer to use on my soils. I think section 7 is quite reasonable, and we should accept it and get on with the bill.

Mr. GARDINER: In reply to the hon. member for Brant, the act gives authority to divide the districts into light soils and heavy soils. I know, as my hon. friend knows, that there are districts where you will have farms