

Mr. HOMUTH: We have extended considerable credits to France, and I am told that France has withdrawn from this organization and has set up a cartel within the past two or three months which has increased the price of potash two or three times. Is that the sort of treatment this government is ready to accept from a nation to which we have extended such tremendous credits? Now we find a bill being brought into this house by which the government say that they must regulate this thing. The price will go up because a nation to which we extended such tremendous credits has withdrawn from the organization and has raised the price of potash two or three times. Will the minister say that that is not true?

Mr. GARDINER: I will not say it is true.

Mr. HOMUTH: You will not say it is not?

Mr. GARDINER: I have no information on which to base an answer, but I do say that it has not much to do with this bill.

Mr. HOMUTH: It has a great deal to do with it.

Mr. GARDINER: If we are not able to get potash from France for any reason, then this bill is all the more necessary.

Mr. FULTON: It is significant to note that the minister has changed his grounds altogether. He is now defending this section on grounds which are quite different from those he first put forward when it was suggested that the section be deleted. I think it would be beneficial to go back and examine the ground which the minister first put forward in support of this section. He said that we had advisory boards which advised that certain fertilizers were best suited to certain areas. As I listened to him, I thought that here was another case where the government is getting confused between the functions of advising and the functions of ordering.

I do not think anyone will object to the principle of government bodies such as agricultural colleges and experimental farms advising what fertilizer or other product is best suited to a certain district, but that is a different thing from having a board order that only a certain fertilizer may be used in a certain district. That is what this section gives the minister the power to do. It is significant to note that that was the first ground put forward in support of this section.

But now there is a difference. It is now said there are certain things which are difficult to get. The government says they are concerned with the even distribution of these things. If the minister only wanted the power to ration and the power to make regulations

for equitable distribution, that would be a different matter, but this section goes far beyond that. This section gives the minister the power to prohibit the sale of certain fertilizers in certain zones.

The minister must admit that farmers are constantly experimenting. If he takes the power to prohibit the sale of certain fertilizers in a certain zone and the farmers in that zone desire to use fertilizers containing ingredients which the minister has forbidden to be used, they are going to halt their experimentation. The farmers are going to find themselves up against this bureaucratic wall which is being erected.

I do not pose as an expert on fertilizers, but I know that in the tomato growing areas there is a tremendous difference of opinion between experts in the various departments, dominion and provincial, as to what fertilizer should be used or whether certain fertilizers should be used at all. If we look at this thing honestly I think we shall find that it is giving the minister power which he should not have. It is going to prevent the farmer from making progress. Furthermore, it is ultra vires and is simply another example of the hunger for regulation and for the power to make regulations which is creeping, sometimes almost unbeknownst, into every enactment which this government brings forward.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: I am not as much an expert on this subject as are most of the previous speakers, but I come from a farming district. If the time taken on this section is an indication of the time it is going to take to put through this bill, I think it will be too late. You have to use this stuff in the spring; there is no use in putting it in after the crops are in. I think the only sensible thing that has been said about this amendment tonight was said by my colleague who is not from a farming district. I support what he said because the Liberals in my riding do not want any of this business of being told what they have to buy and where they have to buy it.

Mr. BRYCE: I do not agree with what has been said tonight by some hon. members. I was not blessed with a university education and I have to depend upon my provincial department to tell me what fertilizer to select. The minister says that it is these provincial boards—

Mr. HOMUTH: No, no.

Mr. BRYCE: I am trying to get some information.

Mr. HOMUTH: You will not get it over there.