MACDONALD COLLEGE

McGILL UNIVERSITY

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POST OFFICE:
MACDONALD COLLEGE, QUE., CANADA

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

February 13th, 1933.

Sir Arthur W. Currie, G.C.M.G.,K.C.B.
Principal,
McGill University,
Montreal, Que.

Dear Sir Arthur:

The enclosed is a letter from Dr. McKibbin referring to the application for a patent on the enrichment of peat by treatment with ammonia.

There is very little connection between the work we are doing on soils and that on peat.

Our Horticulture Department was asked to inquire into the possibilities of peat areas as soils for truck gardening and last fall Dr. McKibbin went to Huntingdon with Professor Murray and took some samples of peat from the Tea Field bog. Later, Mr. L.C. Roy of the Canadian National Railways sent some samples of peat from other districts in the province and Dr. McKibbin has made some comparison of these peats and some imported peat, as regards their absorptive capacity for ammonia. He finds that of the Huntingdon peat highest. He is experimenting on the absorption of stable odours by peat but this work has not progressed far enough to yield any results.

We have permission from the Quebec Government to use one hundred dollars ($100) of their grant for chemical research on the peat. This is more particularly for its use in stables and this is, as far as I can learn, the only connection between the Quebec Government and Dr. McKibbin's peat work.

Peat ordinarily contains only about 1% of nitrogen and this in a form resistant to decomposition and therefore of little value to plant life. We have every reason to believe that the absorbed ammonia would be readily available to plants and it would be a pity if, in view of the extraordinary absorptive capacity of the Huntingdon peat, its possibilities as a fertilizer carrier should not be further investigated. Canadian Industries