

Mr. COLDWELL: The reason I asked the question is that I have been told it is impossible for small organizations in the province to do this job to the extent that may be required. I quite understand that fertilizer will give a different result in one year from that of another year. What I had in mind was this: extensive soil surveys have been made in Saskatchewan. It seems to me if that were known the farmer, instead of listening to some salesman's advice with regard to fertilizer, could get advice from the soil surveys branch. I have been asked on occasion by farmers where they could get some information regarding their land. I have told them to write to the soil survey branch of the university of Saskatchewan. I am not sure whether that is widely known or whether the university branch is sufficiently staffed and equipped. My observation is that while the university has done a very good job on soil surveys, it has an inadequate staff and therefore cannot do the detail work that is required to give the kind of information I have in mind.

Mr. GARDINER: I think it will be found that the advice given is not exactly the advice that should have been given in that particular case. This is what the soil survey organization does, and we give some assistance to the universities in connection with that. They examine into the nature of the soil, and they can give the farmer information as to what the soil is lacking. They can at least give him information as to the nature of the soil. The proper authority to whom to apply for information as how to utilize fertilizer in order to build up the soil on that particular land is the provincial fertilizer board. They are presumed to have the information which the farmer will require in that regard, and it is to them that the farmer should write for advice.

Mr. WRIGHT: Could the minister give us the names of the boards in Saskatchewan?

Mr. GARDINER: The chairman is Mr. Auld, the deputy minister. I think the deputy minister in each province is the chairman of the fertilizer boards. Each has a certain staff of advisers who work under him.

Mr. McNEVIN: Were the differentials in prices referred to by the hon. members for York-Sunbury and Cumberland in effect from 1930 to 1935?

Mr. GARDINER: I am sorry; my information does not go back that far. I should be pleased to give it if I had it.

Mr. SENN: Under what conditions is the freight assistance plan being carried on at the present time? If my information is correct it

is based on the freight rate from the nearest fertilizer plant to the farmer's nearest station. I have been given to understand also that the maximum amount which the farmer can receive is about one dollar a ton. Will the minister give the committee an outline of the plan and what amount can be realized by farmers who are purchasing fertilizer?

Mr. GARDINER: I do not know whether the hon. member has been in the committee since the discussion started, but I thought I gave a sort of outline of it a few moments ago. I was probably wrong in saying that the freight is always paid from the manufacturing plant. That is not necessarily so, because it is paid from the mixing plant, which may not be the place at which the different ingredients that enter into the production of fertilizer are produced. For example, I think that some of the fertilizer manufactured at Trail is shipped down to Vancouver and the mixing takes place at Vancouver. The different ingredients are assembled there and the freight is paid from there out, which has an effect on the freight rate that is paid in the different communities. I am informed that mixing takes place at New Westminster too.

Mr. SENN: Did I understand the minister to say that a subsidy or subvention is paid from where the stuff is originally produced to the mixing plant? I did not understand that. I do not think that is so.

Mr. GARDINER: There is no premium, assistance or subsidy paid where the freight is a dollar or under. Up to three dollars is paid above that one dollar figure.

Mr. SENN: Then three dollars are paid?

Mr. GARDINER: Yes; that is the plan under which payment is made.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): Does the assistance apply to fertilizer used in the cultivation of potatoes? I understand that it did not apply last year. Is that still the situation, and if so, what is the justification for not applying it to fertilizer used in the growing of potatoes? That is one of the main crops in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and parts of Nova Scotia. It is one of the most necessary and staple food products. The feeling among potato producers is that they should get the benefit of any subsidies or payments on fertilizer used in the raising of their crops.

Mr. GARDINER: The subsidy paid to the farmer has been paid over a period of about a year and a half. During that period it was part of the policy followed by the government to encourage the production of feed grain, and it applied only to feed grain crops. But since