

POTASH INDUSTRY IN NEED OF PROTECTION

Leading Producers Now in East in Conference with Fertilizer and Cotton Interests

Leaders in the Nebraska potash industry are now in the east in conference with the fertilizer manufacturers and the cotton growers, who have been holding meetings there during the past week.

Practically all of the potash plants are now shut down or are running with a very limited number of men, and this condition will continue until the product produced during the past year and now stored in the east is disposed of.

The Lincoln State Journal of Sunday carried the following article regarding the potash industry:

A critical period exists in the potash industry of Nebraska, in which a million or two of Lincoln money and about twelve millions of Nebraska cash has been invested. Two things are menacing its further continuance. One is the attitude of the cotton growers of the south. They did not sell all their crop of last year and are holding it for a higher price than now prevails, around 25 cents. As a result of this hold-out policy they are threatening to plant but a small acreage this year. Many farmers have canceled their orders with the big fertilizer companies and these are holding off with their orders.

But little of last year's production of the Nebraska plants has been purchased. Most of it has gone into storage in the southeast and east and at the plants. For some time there was a deadlock between the fertilizer companies, the biggest buyers of potash, and the producers, over the question of price. The fertilizer men, altho their contracts with the farmers called for potash at a higher price than they could buy it, held off in the hope that they could get supplies from abroad.

In this attitude of mind they were buoyed up by announcements from Mr. Hurley, chairman of the shipping board, and from Vance McCormick, chairman of the war trade board. Both men are in Paris. Hurley proposed to utilize home-bound American tonnage by shipping at once the huge stocks of potash, said to be several hundred thousand tons, accumulated in Alsace during the war thru the enforced use by the Germans of the labor of prisoners of war. The ruling of McCormick was that shipments might be made from Alsace under the same rules that apply to importations from other European non-enemy countries.

Hold Off Purchases
With the prospect of a cheap supply of foreign potash, the fertilizer houses naturally refused to purchase the higher cost American product, and altho this is usually the peak of the season, the American producers find themselves loaded up with thousands of tons of potash salts which have been mined and shipped to Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, Atlanta, Jacksonville and other points near places of consumption.

In order to prevent the cheap foreign product coming in and breaking the home market, causing big loss to them, the American producers have been and are now at Washington urging upon congress protection until such a time as they can get away from the old high cost of production. The arguments they are using is that they went into the business, partly because of the government's need for potash, which had been supplied exclusively from Germany before the war, and they had produced the stuff at several times what would have been the ordinary cost of construction in peace times and under conditions of excessive rates for war labor and war materials.

They say that if the present plans carry and cheap potash is allowed to come in now the American producers, with no market for either their present stock or for stocks yet to be produced, will be compelled to close down and those which have kept on producing by borrowing on their stored stocks will be thrown into bankruptcy.

Nebraska furnishes but half of the American production. In 1915 this was 1,000 tons; in 1916, 10,000 tons; in 1917, 33,000 tons and while final figures for 1918 are not yet available the production was about half the total pre-war requirements in the United States. As plans have been laid the entire requirement would have been produced this year.

Because of the scarcity of potash the pre-war price of about \$40 a ton gradually rose to \$250 a ton, and all that has been imported since were re-exports from South America, attracted by the big prices here. Stated units of potash content, the price went from 90 cents before the war to \$5.25 in 1917, but has receded, as domestic production increased, to \$4.25 per unit, the last quotation.

Germany has vast deposits of potash, and in 1910, to smash competition the government took over the industry and afterwards so manipulated prices that whenever any competition threatened anywhere in the world the representatives it had everywhere notified the syndicate, and it sold regardless of price till that competition was threatened. This action of the German government caused the United States department of agriculture nine years ago to investigate potash-producing possibilities in America. After the war began it appealed to both the patriotism and cupidity of the people, and thus has encouraged the investment of over fifty millions in potash-producing plants, a fourth of this sum representing the investment in Nebraska, either as a main or by-product.

Hunting for Potash
Since the hostilities ceased various improvements have been made in methods of production and the search for means to get out of the solids, which contain only 20 per cent potash, the chemicals therein has continued. The owners of the plant at Hoffland have a refinery in

Nebraska's War Work

Nebraska had more soldiers and sailors in the service of the country, in proportion to population, than any other state. Total to September 1, 1918, 40,500.

Nebraska has subscribed more money per capita for Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps, and has given more money per capita to the Red Cross, Y. M. C. A. and K. of C. than any other state. Nebraska was the first state to go over the top in the War Savings campaign.

Nebraska was almost 100 per cent on Food Administration pledges, with 238,071 cards signed. National average was only 50 per cent.

Nebraska was the first state to organize a Farmers' War Council. Nebraska produces more corn, wheat, oats, beef and pork, per capita, than any other state, and increased its production in all lines to help win the war.

Only 5 per cent of the population of Nebraska was born in Germany. Most of them were intensely patriotic, and gave their sons and money for the support of the government.

Nebraska was second in number of four-minute-men speakers.

Omaha and experiments at the Western at Antioch have shown the separation possible. Potash manufacturers say that they do not expect to make the big profit possible in 1915 and 1917, and have recognized that competition from various sources would force prices down. For this reason they have been spending money lavishly to increase the efficiency and decrease the cost of production. At one time it cost \$20 a ton to manufacture in the best plants, but reports from the potash regions indicate that in some this has been cut in two by a new method of treatment.

Potash is one of the most widely-distributed elements in the world. The crust of the earth is full of it, and millions of tons are washed into the sea. Along the Pacific coast great plants have been constructed to recover this from the kelp or seaweed. Great deposits like those in Germany, Spain and Alsace are scarce. Vast quantities of potash are thrown away or dissipated in the waste of cement mills, blast furnaces, sugar factories, etc., and no effort was ever made to recover it until the war shut off the supply from Germany. Many of these plants have spent a lot of money building equipment to save this potash. In addition to these three methods, evaporation of brines, kelp and the ashes of various plants and by-products of big industries, there is a fourth source, the decomposition of silicate rocks. It is out of these that America is expected to build her potash industry, if it can survive its present critical situation.

Since 1915 ten large plants costing from \$500,000 to \$1,500,000 each and twenty-one small plants, costing from \$15,000 to \$75,000, have been erected between Alliance and Lakeside, in western Nebraska. The pioneer, the Potash Reduction Company, is located at Hoffland; the Nebraska, American, Western, Alliance and National at Antioch, the Ford and Standard at Lakeside and the Berg at Merriman. Nebraska produces half the total production in America. There is an immense deposit in Searles lake, in California, where three big companies, representing many millions of investment, operate. Five big plants in Utah are getting potash from the Great Salt lake and alunite rocks. It is figured that if the cement mills get to going on potash from waste material they can supply 100,000 tons a year. The dust from blast furnaces is rich in potash, and the Bethlehem steel company is putting in a recovery plant. From this source an immense supply is expected.

Potash is necessary on the light soils in the cotton and tobacco growing regions. It prevents rust in cotton, and increases the yield. Potash gives southern grown vegetables the texture they need to keep. Potash is an indispensable article of use in nearly every trade. With the supply from Germany shut off fertilizer companies have had to reduce the potash content until the soil that requires it is potash-hungry, as a recent bulletin of the government described it.

Great pressure is being brought on the government at the present time by all of these prospective and actual producers to keep out the foreign product, with the Nebraska producers on the anxious seat because they must sell their stored stuff soon or go out of business.

WANTED TO BUY—Will pay five cents per pound for clean cotton rags. Bring them to The Herald office.

The diversion dam in the North Platte river at Whalen, Wyo., where water is diverted to irrigate nearly 200,000 horsepower—enough to light and heat every home and business house from the Wyoming line to North Platte in the river's valley, and turn every industrial wheel. Unless the people wake up and take steps to retain this great privilege in their own name; it will be grabbed off by some corporation.

RECOMMEND CHANGES IN POTATO GRADING

Department of Agriculture and Food Administration Revise Their Specifications Slightly

Washington, D. C.—The potato grades recommended by the Department of Agriculture and the United States Food Administration, on September 10, 1917, have been changed slightly. The revised grade specifications are stated below:

U. S. Grade No. 1
This grade shall consist of sound potatoes of similar varietal characteristics, which are practically free (a) from dirt or other foreign matter, frost injury, sunburn, second growth, grown cracks, cuts, scab, blight, soft rot, dry rot and damage caused by disease, insects or mechanical or other means.

The diameter (b) of potatoes of the round varieties shall be not less than one and seven-eighths (1 7/8) inches, and of potatoes of the long varieties one and three-fourths (1 3/4) inches.

In order to allow for variations incident to commercial grading and handling, five per centum by weight of any lot may be under the pre-

scribed size, and, in addition, six per centum by weight of any such lot may be below the remaining requirements of this grade; but not more than one-third of such six per centum by weight of the entire lot, may have the flesh injured by soft rot (d).

U. S. Grade No. 2
This grade shall consist of potatoes of similar varietal characteristics, which are practically free from frost injury and soft rot, and which are free from serious damage (c) caused by sunburn, cuts, scab, blight and dry rot or other disease, insects or mechanical or other means. The diameter (b) of potatoes in this grade shall be not less than one and one-half (1 1/2) inches.

In order to allow for variations incident to commercial grading and handling, five per centum by weight of any lot may be under the prescribed size, and, in addition, six per centum by weight of any such lot may be below the remaining requirements of this grade; but not more than one-third of such six per centum, that is to say not more than two per centum by weight of the entire lot, may have the flesh injured by soft rot (d).

Explanation

(a) "Practically free" means that the appearance shall not be injured to an extent readily apparent upon casual examination of the lot, that any damage from the causes mentioned can be removed by the ordinary processes of paring without appreciable increase in waste over that which would occur if the potato were perfect. Loss of the outer skin (epidermis) only shall not be considered as an injury to the appearance.

(b) "Diameter" means the greatest dimension at right angles to the longitudinal axis.

(c) "Free from serious damage" means that any damage from the causes mentioned can be removed by the ordinary processes of paring without increase in waste of more than ten per centum by weight over that which would occur if the potato were perfect.

(d) "Soft rot" means a soft, mushy condition of the tissues, from whatever cause.

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Relieved of Catarrh Due to La Grippe, Thanks to

PERUNA

Mrs. Laurt Berberick, 69 years old, of 1205 Willow Ave., Hoboken, N. J., writes:

"Four years ago I had a severe attack of La-Grippe. After my sickness I was troubled with hoarseness and silms in the head and throat, and was told I had catarrh. I took some medicine but without much benefit. Every winter for four years, I have had La-Grippe (last winter three times). The catarrh grew worse. I could not lie down or sleep at night. Was always troubled with silms, pain in my back and a terrible headache every morning, when I woke up, and had no blood. I got a Peruna calendar in Danish, my native language, and I read it through, every testimony, and then I bought a bottle of Peruna. To-day I can truthfully testify that Peruna has been a great benefit to me. It has given me blood and strength. I can lie down and sleep without being troubled. I have no pain, headache, or noise in my head. I have gained in weight three pounds, which I think is good for my age. I will be sixty-nine years old next summer. I have used Peruna since I started in February, and I use it yet. I feel cheerful and happy, thanks to Peruna. It will always be in my home and I recommend it to those who need it."

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