A STUDY OF PRESENT AND FUTURE SUPPLIES OF FERTILIZER NITROGEN.¹

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Adequate data showing present consumption of fertilizer nitrogen are not available. The best information lies in the reports made by the different components of the fertilizer industry, during the war, to the fertilizer administrator. At that time these reports were required. It is true that business conditions during the war were so abnormal as to raise a question as to the value of statistics accumulated during that period. The same thing, however, may be said of the three years which have elapsed since the close of the war. Therefore, rightly or wrongly, I have taken the year 1918 as a basis for estimating the consumption of fertilizer nitrogen. In all probability the consumption during the present year is less than that indicated in the following table:

CONSUMPTION OF FERTILIZER NITROGEN, 1918.

Of the various methods of classification which may be used in studying the above table of consumption, one of the most significant is on the basis of origin, whether essentially a by-product in nature or otherwise. Classified in this way 64 percent of the fertilizer nitrogen used in the country in 1918 was a secondary product, 36 percent a primary product. The figures show how far removed is the fertilizer industry today from its original and primary function as a scavenger industry.

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