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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION¹

By Professor C. G. WILLIAMS

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION, WOOSTER, OHIO

IN so far as the United States is concerned, the first agricultural experiment station dates back only 57 years, Connecticut having the honor of establishing the first station in 1875.

It is of interest to note what called the experiment station into existence. In his first annual report, Director Atwater said: "There was bitter need of a better control of the trade in commercial fertilizers in the State. One of the chief arguments used in favor of the station has been that by its means a fertilizer control system could be introduced. The demand that its first efforts should be turned in this direction was imperative."

This report gives further proof of the reason for the existence of the station, in that 103 of its 108

¹ Address of the president and chairman of Section O—Agriculture—American Association for the Advancement of Science, Atlantic City, December, 1932.

pages are devoted to information regarding analyses, etc., of the commercial fertilizers on the market. Strange as it may now seem, there was a time when fertilizer manufacturers had a great deal of human nature about them of the unconverted sort. Some 200 samples were received and analyzed by the Connecticut station during this first year.

The questions put up by the Connecticut farmer of the seventies sound very much like those of the Mid-West farmer of 1932, as, for instance, "Are such and such brands of fertilizers of enough value to farmers in this county to warrant their purchase these hard times?"

For several years the staff of the Connecticut station consisted of the director and three or four chemists, whose principal work was to analyze fertilizers, soils, feeds and poisons. This does not mean that noth-

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