

# A MESSAGE FROM THE P. E. I. POTATO MARKETING BOARD

Within a week, the Potato Growers of Prince Edward Island will have an opportunity to cast their votes in a Plebiscite relative to potato marketing.

In brief, the Potato Marketing Board was charged with the responsibility of building the Plan into an active working marketing and promotional design. This they have done and are now presenting the picture or design to you for approval.

In addition to making known the various efforts that the Board has been making during the past eighteen months to promote the marketing of our potatoes, we feel that the growers should know and understand that we feel very strongly that the future of the potato industry depends to a large extent, not only on the specific things we do, but on the degree of co-operation that the Board and the growers are able to develop. We know that under our marketing act and regulations the scope of the Board is broad and there are ample opportunities for us, working with the growers and shippers to develop along the lines set up and improve with industry-wide effort.

## HERE ARE SOME THINGS THE BOARD HAS DONE TO IMPLEMENT OVERALL PLANS FOR THE INDUSTRY

- It has licensed dealers as the marketing agents
- It has made available better seed to the growers and will continue to do so in the future.
- It has co-operated with inspection services to develop top grading and packaging.
- It has started promotional sales activities at the retail and consumer levels.
- It is currently encouraging the growers to build up a strong organization of their own.
- It has maintained membership on every vital committee and agricultural group.
- It has levied and collected 1 cent per 100 pounds for industry support.
- It has co-operated with specialists to give good guidance to potato growers.
- It has operated a promotional and advertising booth at the Royal Winter Fair.
- It has encouraged shippers to organize to police their own activities and act in an advisory capacity to the Board.
- It has, by administering Agreed Rail Charges saved approximately \$643,000 last year.
- It has kept complete and accurate statistics on all potato movements.
- It has registered over 5,000 potato producers.

The Potato Marketing Board looks forward, with the support of growers and shippers, to a new era in the life of the potato industry. The support of a high percentage of the Island's producers at the coming potato marketing plebiscite will give the Board the legal mandate it requires, not only to continue the above program but improve and expand it to serve the potato industry.

## A VOTE NOT CAST IS A VOICE LOST

There are lots of places in the World where farmers would give a lot for the right to vote.

There are some places where farmers who have the right fail to vote.

We hope every Island potato producer will cast his vote in the Potato Marketing Plebiscite

## REMEMBER THE PLEBISCITE DATE

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 1965

THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND POTATO MARKETING BOARD

R. L. BURGE, Chairman  
128 Kent Street, Charlottetown,  
Prince Edward Island.

# P. E. I.

## POTATO MARKETING BOARD

In order to have a full grasp of the operation of the Potato Marketing Board as at Dec. 13, 1963 it is necessary to give a short summary of the preceding period which was essentially a "caretaker" operation. Even in this capacity the Board did carry on considerable promotional work but was at all times handicapped for funds and could not get involved in a major undertaking. Some of the things that I would like to bring to your attention that happened in this period were, attention to the Agreed Charges with the Railway, promotion and advertising such as the Royal Winter Fair, advertising in the potato papers and magazines, the preparation and distribution of the Potato Brochure, the attendance at Potato Conferences in other provinces and promoting and carrying out of one in this province which was considered highly successful.

The original planning regarding the Elite Seed Farm covered a few years back but lack of funds prevented it being a reality until May 1962, at which time the Potato Board succeeded in selling the idea to the Department of Agriculture and get Government backing to make a start.

Considerable attention was given to Tariff matters such as "Value for Duty." Some success on this matter was achieved particularly by way of retaining our good relations with customers in U. S. A.

The first act of the Board was to pass Board Order A-1 on December 13, 1963 which set-up the Selling Agency for the Marketing Board, namely the Licensed Dealers of the Province, and appointed them as collectors of the 1c per 100 pounds levy.

One of the reasons for the appointment of the shippers as the Selling Agency of the Board was because they were fully qualified to deal with the problems of marketing, proof of which should be found in the fact that they have been capable of developing markets in 22 countries of the World, 26 States of U. S. A. and all provinces of Canada. The promotional work done in the Export Markets through the years was dealt with without any cost to the Industry. These shippers have done a most remarkable job in connection with the Potato Industry in the form of advertising and promotion of Island Potatoes, dealing with the customers in a manner which developed such confidence that they have been able not only to get but retain these markets for the growers of this province.

The Board, under the Plan, has been instructed to carry out promotional work. To do so the work must of necessity have a purpose. A purpose to be of any value to the Potato Industry must keep in mind the old established law of supply and demand. Following this thinking the Board feels that its endeavor should be directed along the line of having satisfied consuming customers among the group that we now have the pleasure of supplying. In addition to that, and in order to create a greater demand we must increase our number of customers to bring our demand in line with, or greater than our supply.

Promotional work in the Potato Industry must not only start at planting time, but prior to it in order to have available the best seed in the World. If the best crops in the World are to be produced. This work ends only at the time when the product is delivered to the housewife or consumer in a package at the retail store. The Board must see that the best seed possible to produce is available to the grower. The Board must also see that the grower has all the advice available from the many agricultural services that will insure the proper care in his planting, growing, harvesting and grading operations. Also, it has been urged on the shippers to fulfill their obligations and get the crop to market as free from damage and injury as possible. In doing this we are pleased to say that the Inspection Services have given full cooperation to the Board.

All these phases of the promotional moves of the Board should be elaborated on. This we will try to do by taking the different parts of promotion.

A start has been made to arrive at a better class of seed for the planting of our crops, by the acquiring and purchase of a farm for the production of Elite Seed. These plans were delayed for some time due to lack of funds but in order to be moving somewhat in the right direction the Board, with the cooperation of the Seed Department here set-up the growing of a quantity of Super Foundation Seed for distribution throughout the province. To encourage such an undertaking the Board bonused successful growers to the extent of 30c per 100 pounds. A goodly portion of the potatoes that will be planted this year will be the result of the production and reproduction of that planting. Then, by selling to the Department of Agriculture not only the idea but the necessity of establishing a farm as planned for, the Board got sufficient financial backing to proceed. The results to date we need not go into because of full knowledge of our temporary misfortune which will result in delay in the benefits to the industry—but accidents will happen. To report further on the hope of the farm we like to say that the Seed Departments at Ottawa, and in this province, are not only ready but willing to increase their effort to re-establish us on a sounder basis than the original plan. The original plan was for the eye-indexing of a quantity of seed, the production of which would not be sufficient to plant our planned acreage. The present plan is that they promise to increase their eye-indexing to a point where we will have sufficient seed for an acreage of 30 acres or more of none-other-than Elite 1 and 11 Seed.

Our Booth at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto has served as an outstanding means of contact with the consuming public, and in fact, up until a short time ago was the only consumer contact we had. Our Booth in the Upper West Annex of the Coliseum has a very favourable position and attracts a large number of people.

The program is carried on by selected personnel who have been most successful in meeting the public. We give away 5-pound samples of our Island Potatoes to visiting housewives, also pamphlets and recipe books, and all are favourably received. We have two people on duty at all times to enter into conversation with the visitors and answer all the questions pertaining to potatoes and the Potato Industry of Prince Edward Island.

This type of promotion has been assessed by many others and even competitors as being one of the finest.

The Potato Marketing Board found by observation and study a great need for promotion at the retail level, namely the stores, chain and otherwise. One of the problems that the Potato Industry was confronted with was the lack of interest in placing our product in a favourable position in the stores and a lack of interest on the part of the store managers to promote sales of our product. Having this great need in mind we employed a promotion firm, namely John Bentham Sales Limited. The duties of this company were to sit in at meetings with the executives of Chain Stores and other retail outlets in Toronto endeavouring to get their full cooperation in the movement of our potatoes through their stores. In this regard we have every evidence of cooperation between our representatives and the executives. With our approval John Bentham Sales Ltd. have hired leg men from the firm of Perkins and Bone Ltd. to visit retail outlets, discuss improvement where necessary with the store manager, and get his support in regard to the location and display of our potatoes. One of the examples of the Board cooperating with this promotion job was the supplying of our leaflets giving Potato Tips, Storage Hints, and Nutritional Value of Potatoes. This met with such enthusiastic support from the Chain Stores in particular that it was necessary for us to supply them with approximately 400,000 leaflets. Approval of this was expressed by those who studied this particular activity, even those who are our competitors. It is difficult to give a very complete estimate of the improvement as it is so new, and the effects will continue to show as time goes on. We do know that an increased volume of orders has been received, our previous years, found their way to the consumer in the Toronto area. Between 400 - 500 more cars were shipped to the Toronto market to date this year.

This plan of promotion at the retail level as it appears at the moment is complete in every detail. Not only that but it forms an organized effort that can spread and will spread to all major consuming centres in Ontario, and Montreal, as fast as means become available.

In endeavouring to have a better and more uniform grade of potatoes shipped from the Island we have always followed the practice of discussing and dealing with the Heads of the two Inspection Services, namely the Seed Potato Certification Branch and the Fruit and Vegetable Branch at the local level and also at the Federal level. At one time we found, following complaints from the receivers, that there was a lack of uniformity in grading in this province. With this in mind the Marketing Board approached Mr. Eardley, Chief, Marketing Services at Ottawa and requested three supervisors who are instructed to bring the Inspection Service of this province to a uniform standard.

As at the moment there is one missing link in the promotional work and that is cooperation between the Board and the receivers at point of delivery. A method is being devised with the help and advice of the Executive of the Potato Dealers' Association whereby we will have complete contact in this important part of the Marketing Plan.

The Potato Board was fully aware that it was necessary to have a strong shippers organization working for the purpose of planning better marketing practices and also with the thought in mind of them building a strong executive that could be of valuable assistance in an advisory capacity to the Board. A committee from the Board and the advisory capacity to the Board. A committee from the Board and the exporters working in a cooperative manner brought a smoother approach to the problem of dealing with our exports. This resulted in an improvement in the handling of our exports this season. It is planned that for the future this method of dealing will be continued, enlarged on, and improved.

The Board realizes the greater part of the entire potato industry is the grower who is responsible for the production of the finest quality of potatoes in the World, but there being approximately 6,000 growers and the Board not having a sufficient avenue of approach to them nor they to the Board, feels that there is a great necessity for the growers being organized in such a way that they may fully cooperate in any and every marketing and promotional activity of the Industry. There is a move at this time to bring about such an organization in this province that will be in an advisory position to the Board in matters relating to growers' interests.

The Agreed Charge CTC (AC) 75 which was entered into between the Potato Shippers of Prince Edward Island and the Canadian National Railways in administered by the P.E.I. Potato Marketing Board. At the present time there are thirty-two supplements which have been added to the original Agreed Charges. These preferred rates apply to 164 destinations in Ontario and Quebec. On the shippers side it has been agreed to use no other means of transportation for potatoes to the designated points. The Railway on its part agrees to a reduction in rates per 100 pounds. When originally entered into the freight rate to Toronto was 72c per 100 pounds and was reduced by agreement to 60c per 100 pounds. Since that time there were several increases in freight rates and at one time we were asked to re-negotiate the Agreed Charge. We were able to do this on the basis of a 1c increase per 100 pounds. Without the Agreed Charge the rate would be 77c per 100—a difference of 20c per 100. The difference to other points in some cases is more and in other cases less but using Toronto as an example the saving on the basis of a 450cwt. car is \$90.00 per car. Our shipments last year to Ontario and Quebec amounted to 7,150 carlots of 450 cwt. or a saving of approximately \$643,500.

The Potato Marketing Board is a voting member of Canadian Horticultural Council and has taken an active interest in everything pertaining to potatoes. We are represented on all committees, Horticultural Council. The principal committees of interest to the Potato Industry are the Potato Committee, the Transportation Committee, and the Tariff Committee. The Board's representative was charged in 1964 with the responsibility of preparing a Brief on the "Needs of the Potato Industry" for submission to the McKinnon Commission set-up by the Department of Trade and Commerce to receive such information. A local committee was formed for the purpose of preparing such a Brief. The Brief was favourably received and is being given full consideration by the Department of Trade and Commerce. The results will not be known until such time as the Kennedy-Round negotiations are completed.

Statistical reports on the complete movement of the potato crop by rail, water and truck are kept in the Board office as well as the complete rail movement to provinces of Canada and States of U.S.A. This entails a considerable amount of work.

One of the many jobs done in the office of the Potato Board was the Registration of Potato Producers which number upwards of 5,000. You are all familiar with this and no doubt have your rubber stamps. The Board appreciates the cooperation of the grower in all matters pertaining to this venture.

The Plan as set-up and given to us was comparable to a jigsaw puzzle with all the component parts. The assembling of these parts into a complete picture was the duty of the Board. As previously stated we felt that to be effective promotional work must start at pre-planting and end when the product is delivered to the consumer. The results make up the picture which we are presenting to you now.

Having given to the best of our ability, a summary of the activities of the Board, what is there to say about the future. The two groups from which the Potato Marketing Board requires full cooperation are the growers and the shippers. The shippers have only recently been organized and we already feel benefits from such an organization. We are looking forward to the organization of the producers which will add still further strength to the Marketing Board. With the full cooperation of these two organizations it is our humble opinion the present Marketing Plan as set-up could go into the future continuing to serve and improve our Potato Industry and place us in the best competitive position in Canada or U.S.A.

We have done our utmost in putting the Plan into effect as we have presented it to you. We have tapped the sources of knowledge and information on all matters pertaining to the marketing and promotion of potatoes. We have nothing more to give at this moment. We feel confident that you will give this very important matter your full study and consideration and having done that you can conscientiously give a YES or NO to the question on the ballot.

We have done our duty for the moment and when you vote you will have performed your duty towards the Potato Industry.

We have endeavored to the best of our ability to put the Temporary Plan into practical use for the benefit of the grower because it is the plan in action and it is today that will change the Temporary Plan into a Permanent Plan and establish a mandate for the present Board and the new Board that will replace it.

## THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND POTATO MARKETING BOARD

R. L. BURGE, Chairman  
123 Kent Street, Charlottetown