

National Potato Letter . . . Zero Weather Deals Blow To Maine's Spud Supplies

Official potato supply figures will remain unchanged until the December final report due about December 18. But events do not wait for the crop reports. Weather finally caught up with Aroostook county in Maine, delivering a one-two punch below the zero mark Sunday and Monday nights. No estimate can be made yet as to the extent of damage to stocks in emergency storage, but it is safe to say that there probably are not many potatoes left in piles, sheds, barns, etc. Some emergency stored lots almost certainly were affected, especially those in runways, caves, cellars and the warmer barns. But Maine had probably 10 million sacks outside of permanent storages, and we guess that most of what was not shipped or sold for starch before the temperature dip is wiped out. Scattered reports indicate zero temperatures in a few other places also, but in these areas relatively few emergency storages are involved. DOA still has the problem of paying off for the frozen stocks, but it is a money problem now. The potatoes are gone and nobody has to worry about what to do with them. Even where we sit, it is too bad they had to be dug and stored. It is bad enough to waste the potatoes, but the waste of labor to dig, haul, store, and now dump is a downright addition of insult to injury.

Movement
Shipments last week really failed off to a very low level for this time of the year. The Thanksgiving holiday had its effect, of course, but we did not expect the figure to fall so low. Total for the week was only 3770 cars, of which DOA took 98, leaving only 3672 cars for the markets. Maine and Idaho were almost even with 1163 and 1126 cars, respectively. Nebraska had 215, Colorado 193, California 187, and North Dakota 181. No other state even came close to the 200-car mark. Except for those named, only Oregon with 134, and Long Island with 104 even topped 100 cars.

Shortfall of shipments to date, compared with last year, now amounts to 10,042 cars, up 1138 cars in the past week, and reflecting the absence of the export outlets that were so opportune last season. We have heard of no sections yet hurt by strike-caused lack of cars or curtailed shipping schedules.

Demand and Markets
Round-up of the market news shows Maine with a slow to very slow demand, the market mostly dull but turning slightly stronger, prices up a nickel to 50-55 cents under the higher December support price. (Support prices in all areas went up a dime December 1, which will make some comparisons look worse than a week ago even when actual prices are better.) Upstate New York reports the demand slow, market dull, prices unchanged to 5 cents higher at 55 cents under the floor. Michigan demand has ruled slow, the market dull turning unsettled, and prices unchanged for Rurals at 60 to 65 cents under the floor, with Chippewas 30 to 35 cents under floor. Wisconsin demand has been light, the market about steady, but too few sales to establish a market. North Dakota Red River valley demand has been very slow, the market consistently dull, and prices unreliable account of few sales. Nebraska demand appears improving, the market slightly stronger for No. 1's, prices up 15 cents to 5 cents over support on a washed basis. Colorado San Luis valley demand has continued slow, the market about steady and prices down 5 to 10 cents under the floor on a washed basis. Idaho

demand has been fair turning to slow, the market about steady turning slightly weaker and prices off 5 to 10 cents at floor. Washington demand has continued fair, the market steady and prices unchanged at 20 to 25 cents over the floor at Ellensburg, 5 to 10 cents over floor Yakima, both on a washed basis. Very little good news is reported in the terminal markets. Chicago reports consistently slow demand, the market steady to slightly weaker for Idahos and Colorados, and others steady to dull. New York is reported mostly dull, with strength at the week-end but turning slightly weaker in later trading. Atlanta held steady but turning firm for Maines. Boston ruled dull turning about steady. Detroit held about steady turning slightly weaker for Idahos but firm for Michigans. Minneapolis held steady turning dull for Northerns, slightly weaker for Idahos. Philadelphia reports dull all around. San Francisco held firm to steady, with the range on Klamath No. 1's narrowing to \$2.85 to \$3 for LCL wholesale lots. Track holdings have held pretty high, averaging 830 dollar over the last five market days.

Something to Think About
Much talk about increasing potato consumption, by-product outlets, etc., but not enough people doing anything about these problems. They go hand in hand, can't get away from each other. Best way to increase consumption as food is to make potatoes attractive, make people want to buy them. This means we need much better distribution practices, better grading, sizing, packing, handling, displaying. Better grading and sizing automatically mean a bigger cull pile. Sale of culls can destroy all the benefits of doing the rest of the job better. What to do with culls? Other low grades? No industrial producer expects every unit of his output to be perfect. Every industrial producer expects part of his output to be unsalable. No farmer buys shoes, machinery, cars, without expecting them to meet certain standards of quality and kicking like a bay steer if they don't. No farmer should expect to sell in food channels potatoes that don't measure up to a pretty fair quality standard. Sub-standard sales make consumers sore, reduce distribution, and give a nudge to declining per capita consumption. Net, in the long run, sub-standard sales almost certainly cost growers much more than the momentary gain represented by the sales value.

Washington observers appear agreed that the potato industry and by-product industries should work this out together. Develop industries where there aren't any. Improve relations where the facilities already exist. The industries need to assure growers a fair price year in and year out, regardless of commercial potato market levels. Growers need to assure industries a constant source of supply year in and year out, at fair prices, regardless of quick profits in tight markets. Recognition of mutual interdependence backed by teamwork can do this part of the job. These are ideas of people who have followed the problems of potato growers for many years.

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Fremont Junior High Officers



Deep in the school year's activities, leaders of the Fremont Junior high school student body scan the bulletin board. Left to right, they are, Roddy Davis, vice president; Gary Rose, treasurer; Bob Bosworth, president and Betty Pinniger, secretary.

Snell Urges Rate Raise Opposition

SALEM, Dec. 16 (AP)—Governor Earl Snell today urged a united effort in opposition to a move by some eastern congressmen to increase electric rates in the northwest.

The eastern congressmen said they would appropriate no more funds for Bonneville dam unless the rates are increased.

Governor Snell said it is a move to "cripple the industrial development sure to come to this area by depriving us of the advantages bestowed so abundantly by nature in an unlimited supply of cheap hydro-electric power."

He said figures prove that Bonneville and Grand Coulee can pay for themselves at existing power rates.

Paratrooper Gets Ten-Year Sentence

SAPPARO, Japan, Dec. 16 (AP)—Pvt. Russell E. Garvin, 615 South 13th street, Yakima, Wash., a paratrooper who broke out of army stockades four times, today was convicted of desertion by an eleventh airborne division court-martial. He was sentenced to ten years at hard labor, dishonorable discharge and forfeiture of his pay. The sentence is subject to review.

Patagonia is in South America. It is, roughly, the region east of the Andes and south of the Rio Negro.

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Sprague River

Word has been received by Mrs. A. Mayo that Mrs. Peter Striet, formerly of here, is in the La Grande hospital for a major operation.

Miss Esther Shadley of Santa Rosa, Calif., is spending a few days with her father, Fred Shadley and grandmother, Rosa Shadley.

Norma Jackson was in Chiloquin on business December 6. Vince Bodner Jr. spent the week-end with his mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Vince Bodner Sr. He is enrolled at the Henley high school.

Mr. and Mrs. Roycie Johnson have moved to Coquille, Oregon.

Mr. and Mrs. John Darco have sold their house to Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Story. The Darco family will return to Portland, Oregon.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Grafton spent the week visiting Mrs. Andy Ortis and family.

Mrs. Owen Ludwick is confined to her home with the flu. The school gave a box supper December 6 with a very good turn-out. Boxing matches were the main attraction. With Morris Chandler, Benny Lawver, Jackie Barney, Jimmy Barney, Jimmy Coburn, Leon Jackson, James Miller and Robert Lake participating.

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C-54 Crashes At Fairbanks

FAIRBANKS, Dec. 16 (AP)—Eleven persons were reported recovering today at the Ladd field hospital from exposure and injuries in the crash of a four-engine C-54 in 56-below-zero-cold.

The injured men, all military personnel whose names were withheld, were trapped in the crumpled nose section of the plane for four hours following the accident late Friday night before rescuers could free them.

The plane developed engine trouble in a takeoff from the Ladd field base and smashed into a metal hangar after a forced landing from a few feet off the ground.

The rescuers were forced to work with hand tools because of large quantities of gasoline spilled around the ground. Large blower heaters provided some relief from the cold and

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Oregon Payrolls Show Slight Drop

SALEM, Dec. 16 (AP)—Oregon firms subject to the state industrial accident commission reported November payrolls of \$42,722,417, a gain of more than \$8,000,000 from November 1945, but a drop of \$1,300,000 from October, the commission said today.

November payrolls for Multnomah county industries totaled \$17,186,678, a drop of \$1,000,000 from November, 1945, and a decrease of \$400,000 from the preceding month.

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