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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Dealer Losses To Be Stressed

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I HAVEN'T received any reactions from potato producers regarding the amount of compensation being paid by the government for Fusarium rot losses from the 1960 crop. It may be because most of them live in Western Prince County, and I have not been talking to them. But we've been hearing plenty from the dealers, some of whom lost much more heavily than the producers.

Donald A. MacDonald is the only dealer who has been quoted directly and he has challenged the validity of the federal government excuse that "no authority exists for aiding dealers". I find myself in agreement with him on several arguments he has developed in stories published this week in these newspapers.

He punctured the argument that no authority exists when he said parliament could have been asked for authority any time during the past six months

BUT THE claim that impresses me most is that "certification tags attached to potato bags which the dealers purchase in good faith, should mean something". As they've been interpreted by the federal government, they do not mean a thing so far as the confidence of the buyer is concerned.

Mr. MacDonald contends that the government should have stood behind their certification tag to the extent of providing some compensation for dealers who bought the spuds in good faith and lost heavily as a result.

The government is correct when it says that the certification tag does not guarantee condition of the spuds for any period of time. The tag says "Canada Department of Agriculture declares that the field specified by the certificate number shown on the front of this tag passed inspections for the class as indicated, and that on the date shown a representative sample of the crop was inspected and found to be within the tuber standards established".

Another paragraph states the grower certifies the potatoes were grown on the specified field and were graded according to the tuber standards established.

The statement concludes "the original purchaser is advised to examine the contents of this package without delay".

More Meaning Is Seen Need

THE FEDERAL government is technically correct when it implies that it has no responsibility to the buyers - its certification tag makes that clear - but surely federal authority in this case should be supported by some degree of responsibility.

Anyone will agree that there cannot be a quality guarantee for an indefinite time on a perishable product like potatoes but surely the certification tag should mean something,

and I can't see that it means anything now, so far as the men who buy the spuds are concerned.

Producers and dealers in P.E.I. are not always in agreement, but I never saw such solid agreement as producers expressed at the O'Leary meeting that dealers should be compensated as well as themselves. The O'Leary meeting was where the loss problem was first assessed and plans were made for a compensation demand.

THE DEALER loss problem, I'm told, is not going to be dropped on the current Ottawa refusal to take action. I'm told it is going to be pushed just as far as possible in an effort to get what one dealer described to me as a minimum of justice.

I gather that pressure will be applied where possible to get further action. I've been told, for instance, that our members of parliament may be asked to explain what they have done so far on this important matter, and what further action they propose to take in the immediate future.

### Human, Helpful Side Is Stressed

A GREAT deal has been written through the years about Lt. Col. Dan MacKinnon's prowess as an athlete soldier, fur rancher, businessman, sportsman and many other phases of a busy, colorful and successful career. I join a host of friends in hailing his appointment to the Sports Hall of Fame but I want to say something about a lesser known side of the genial friend I've been privileged to know for almost thirty years.

My reference is to the human kindness, the words of encouragement and the morale lifting episodes in which he has figured so many times when he has met people who needed a "psychological lift".

I can speak with authority for it's almost thirty years since he gave me encouragement, an understanding appraisal and sound advice. I didn't even know that he knew who I was, when he stopped me one day for the chat which turned out to be so important. I won't bore you with details but the talk came when I needed it most and I've never forgotten it. Because of his example, I've often tried to pass on to others something of what this kindly gentleman gave to me.

IT'S BECAUSE I've found that over the years he has often stopped with an encouraging or cheering word for others, that I want to pay this sincere tribute at this time.

Col. MacKinnon gave me several of the greatest thrills I experienced while I was a sports writer. It must be at least twenty years since he came out of retirement to drive an old trotting horse, Heatherbell, in a new record on the Montague track to create a sensation at the time. But those things belong on the sports pages.

I wanted to refer to the other and lesser known side of his character, because it fits into a column of this kind.

Come to think of it, Col. MacKinnon never did manage to retire. It was only last week, I think, that I read of him winning a race here with his "Blue Skylark" on the CDP racing strip.

### Cream Mink Seen At Morell

I SAW this week a beautiful cream colored mink at George MacNeill's ranch at Morell. The young male is a beauty and Mr. MacNeill is excited about the prospects of getting some attractive new color phase from cross breeding experiments with this animal.

His body is a solid color - there's absolutely no mottling - and he's pretty as a picture. A few females are used each year - perhaps 25 in 1,000 - for experimental breeding as the rancher searches for new color phases which will attract the world's fur buyers.