

Secretary Bull Opposes New Freight Rate Hike

State Agriculture Secretary Leland H. Bull today went on record as opposing the railroad industry's request for a fourth freight rate increase since 1967.

He charged that the proposed increase now being considered by the Interstate Commerce Commission will add to the "startling death toll" in the number of farms in the state. He said Pennsylvania now has 73,000 farms compared to 88,000 six years ago.

Secretary Bull pointed out that Pennsylvania farmers are forced to absorb inflationary costs without having the means of recovering the higher costs. He also charged that farmers in Pennsylvania and other Northeastern states are victims of discriminatory freight rates which persist on grain and grain products shipped from the Mid West. Lower rates prevail he said on grain shipments to the Southeast.

"As I have said before across the board increases in freight rates continue to aggravate this deplorable situation by placing an unfair burden on Pennsylvania users of grain," Bull said.

Bull who recently expressed his opinions on the proposed freight increase when he testified before the ICC in Washington, D.C., said he believes a fourth freight rate increase in less than three years is unjustified.

He called for an investigation and the suspension of any proposed freight rate increases.

Leaf Tobacco Stocks Show Substantial Drop

A decrease of 168 million pounds in the April 1 leaf tobacco stocks in the United States and Puerto Rico was announced recently by the Consumer and Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Based on quarterly stocks reports of dealers and manufacturers, inventories of leaf tobacco in the United States and Puerto Rico totaled 4,837 million pounds (farm sales weight) as of April 1, 1970, compared with a total of 5,005 million pounds April 1, 1969.

Flue cured and Maryland leaf tobaccos showed the largest declines. Flue-cured, dark air-cured cigar filler, and cigar binder stocks reached record lows for the April quarter. Only two domestic types — burley and Georgia-Florida shade tobaccos — had larger inventories than on the previous April 1. Imported cigarette and cigar tobacco was also higher.

Marketing from the 1969 crop was completed by April 1 except from Maryland and some cigar tobaccos.

Stocks of leaf tobacco under Government loan as of April 1 totaled about 1,277 million pounds (farm sales weight), 28 million pounds higher than a year ago. Burley and dark air-cured loan holdings accounted for the entire increase. These loan stocks were divided as follows: Flue-cured 772.5 million pounds, burley 469.9 million, flue-cured 13.2 million, dark air-cured 19.0 million, and cigar leaf 2.7 million.

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