



WESLEY F. PORTER HONORED

Mr. Chairman and members of The Potato Association of America. First of all, let me thank the Association for selecting Mr. Porter from Maine as one of those to receive honorary life membership this evening. It is fitting and proper that I thank someone for the invitation to be with you and to tell the Association what I think of the job Wesley F. Porter has done for the potato industry. Mr. Porter, now retired, was for many years Program Director for the State Seed Potato Board. It was my good fortune to be associated with him in various potato programs for about one-quarter of a century and it is a great pleasure for me to say something about Mr. Porter's work and my association with him.

Mr. Porter started his career as an inspector in the State Department of Agriculture, and I had the honor of being associated with him during most of his active service. In addition to his work, there has always been a close personal relationship as well as the friendship which comes from working together as public servants and recognizing in Mr. Porter a real contributor to our most important potato industry. Not of much importance, but it just happens that Mr. Porter and I are both members of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity which we think has a good name in college life. In passing, I would like to say that perhaps he and I had some advantages in the early days of our potato work. We were in the midst of constructing

our programs when Dr. Schultz and Dr. Folsom were enjoying an international reputation. They were followed by Dr. Bonde whom many of you know, and I am sure that Mr. Porter would agree with me that he had an excellent opportunity in his early work.

It is needless for me to go into detail except to say that Mr. Porter's contribution to our certified seed work, followed by his being Program Director at Porter Farm in Masardis, did a lot to put Maine in its present position in the seed potato industry. It would be unfair if I didn't mention that Mr. Porter did much to encourage young men coming into potato work. He was patient with hem, did his best to be helpful, and one of his long-time associates, Mr. Ted Humphrey, is now Program Director at Porter Farm.

We had difficulties with Porter as we have with anybody, but they were all on the right side of the ledger. For instance, when he hired out as Program Director, the salary was not mentioned. Being familiar with State work, I took occasion to tell him that the Seed Board had indicated that they wanted him and now was the time for him to get a day's pay if he ever expected to get it. This made no definite impression apparently because it was many weeks after that before he knew what his pay check was going to be. This was typical of the man. His potato work came first and other things fell into line as being of lesser importance.

The Seed Board, in my judgment, paid a real tribute to the man whom we are honoring here this evening by naming their farm at Masardis the Wesley F. Porter Foundation Seed Potato Farm. A tablet on a large boulder in the front yard as you enter the farm reads as follows:

"In recognition of the valuable services rendered by Wesley F. Porter of Presque Isle to the potato industry of Maine, this farm shall be known as the Wesley F. Porter Foundation Seed Potato Farm. First as a certified seed inspector, later as an assistant in the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station, and finally as program director for the State Seed Potato Board, Mr. Porter's accomplishments have been outstanding, while his ability to detect potato diseases in the field has seldom been equalled."

I salute the Potato Association for its selection and Mr. Porter for the job he has done. We in the industry are extremely proud of men of his type. As Commissioner of Agriculture of the State of Maine, I again want to thank the Potato Association of America for honoring Mr. Porter.

E. L. Newdick, Commissioner