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## Floor Statement on Potato Legislation

Edmund S. Muskie

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5/25/71

**MR. MUSKIE.** Mr. President, I am happy to introduce today, at the request of the Maine Potato Council, legislation prohibiting futures trading in Irish potatoes on commodity exchanges.

Passage of this legislation has been sought for a number of years by the potato growers in Maine.

Identical legislation has been introduced in the House this year, and in two previous Congresses. Lengthy hearings were held in 1966, before the House Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing and Consumer Relations, of the House Committee on Agriculture.

Since that time, the circumstances surrounding this proposal have not changed.

The plight of the potato farmer in Maine has not improved.

The proposal has continued to receive the support of both the Maine Potato Council and the National Potato Council as well.

Supporters of this legislation argue that it is essential to allow the farmer both greater freedom in marketing and better prices for his product. Opponents of the proposal hold that futures trading, and the advantages it brings, is vital to assuring a consistent market and a stable price structure for the potato crop.

Whichever side one takes on this matter, it is clear that the economic issues involved are complex and demand our attention.

Therefore, I urge that the Senate give its careful consideration to this legislation during the present Congress.