

BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OF THE
FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Statement for the Press

For release in morning newspapers of
Saturday, August 21, 1937.

August 20, 1937.

The Board of Governors today approved the action of the directors of the Federal Reserve Banks at Atlanta and Chicago in reducing the discount rate from 2% to 1½%, effective in the 6th and 7th Federal Reserve Districts, respectively, on August 21, 1937.

The Board's approval was based upon the view that the reduction of discount rates at this time would assist in carrying out the System's policy of monetary ease and make Federal Reserve bank credit readily available to member banks for the accommodation of commerce, business and agriculture, without encouraging member banks to borrow outside of their districts or to liquidate their portfolios in order to be in a position to meet the needs of present or prospective borrowers.

The reduction in discount rates, which have had little or no practical effect during the period when excess reserves were abnormally large and widely distributed throughout the System, brings the rates into closer relation with the interest rate structure generally prevailing, and affords to member banks the benefit of rates, on advances made by the Federal Reserve bank, which are in line with those available in the money market. During the extended period when excess reserves of the banking system were between two and three billions of dollars, the occasion did not arise except in rare instances for member banks to borrow

- 2 -

from the Federal Reserve banks, and the discount rates were accordingly inoperative as a practical matter.

As a result of the continued progress of the recovery movement, demands of agriculture, industry and commerce for bank accommodation have steadily increased and at the present time are augmented by seasonal requirements, particularly with relation to crop movements. While excess reserves, following the action of the Board in increasing reserve requirements, remain at an unusually high level of approximately \$750,000,000 at present for the System as a whole, they are distributed preponderantly among the country banks and not in the money centers. The reduction of the discount rates in the two large agricultural districts of Atlanta and Chicago should serve to assist the member banks to utilize credit directly available in these districts in order to meet banking requirements in connection with crop movements and business needs.

It is the Board's view, therefore, that at this time the Federal Reserve System can best discharge its public responsibility and promote the continuance of recovery by making it possible for member banks to obtain accommodation from Federal Reserve banks at rates which will encourage them to employ their funds to meet the needs of agriculture, industry and commerce.