

**The original documents are located in Box D24, folder “Kent and Ionia County Farm Bureaus, Wyoming, MI, May 18, 1968” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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KENT AND IONIA COUNTY FARM BUREAUS  
SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 18, 1968, WYOMING, MICH.

"ONE HUNDRED PER CENT OF OPPORTUNITY"

I AM HUMBLED TO THINK THAT YOU HAVE GATHERED HERE TONIGHT, ~~IN MY HONOR~~. THIS ALSO MAKES ME FEEL VERY PROUD. AND CERTAINLY I FEEL GRATEFUL FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF REPRESENTING YOU IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES. <sup>FRIENDS -</sup> *Farm Bureau Community Group Meetings.*

I HAVE ALWAYS TRIED TO DO THE BEST JOB I KNOW HOW FOR YOU--AND ANY TIME YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR ME I WILL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO HEAR THEM. WHAT I AM SAYING IS/THAT I WANT YOU TO HELP ME HELP YOU.

IN MY BOOK, FARM PEOPLE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH. I HAVE ALWAYS FELT VERY CLOSE TO THEM. TO ME, THEY ARE VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE--THE FIRST AMONG THE CHOSEN.

*In addition to my long & close friendships with many*  
LET ME TELL YOU WHY YOU ARE



IMPORTANT.

AGRICULTURE IS THE LARGEST OF THE 12 BIGGEST AMERICAN INDUSTRIES. IT LEADS IN ASSETS. IT LEADS IN SPENDING FOR EQUIPMENT. IT LEADS IN NUMBER OF WORKERS.

IT CONSTANTLY AMAZES ME THAT OUR FARMERS, WHO MAKE UP 10 OR 11 PER CENT OF OUR POPULATION, ARE ABLE TO PRODUCE ENOUGH FOOD AND FIBER TO MEET THE NEEDS NOT ONLY OF THE 224 MILLION PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY BUT MILLIONS IN OTHER NATIONS AS WELL. WHAT A CONTRAST WITH THE SOVIET UNION, WHERE MORE THAN 50 PER CENT OF THE PEOPLE LIVE ON THE FARMS BUT CANNOT PRODUCE ENOUGH OF THE BASIC NECESSITIES FOR EVEN THEIR OWN COUNTRYMEN! THIS GOES TO PROVE THE GREAT STRENGTH OF OUR FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM.

THE AMERICAN FARMER HAS PRODUCED AN ECONOMIC MIRACLE IN THE LAST TWO DECADES. IF THE FARMER HAD NOT GREATLY INCREASED HIS EFFICIENCY, EVERY AMERICAN WOULD BE PAYING



MORE FOR HIS FOOD...AND ENJOYING IT LESS.

AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT HAS GONE UP 5 PER CENT A YEAR SINCE 1948 WHILE OUTPUT PER MAN-HOUR IN MANUFACTURING HAS INCREASED JUST 2.7 PER CENT PER YEAR.

FARM PRODUCTION HAS JUMPED NEARLY 40 PER CENT DURING THE LAST 20 YEARS. OR, TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, EACH AMERICAN FARMER TODAY GROWS ENOUGH TO FEED 40 PEOPLE, COMPARED TO ONLY 12 IN 1948.

WHO ACCOMPLISHED THIS MIRACLE? IT WAS THE FAMILY-SIZED FARM.

TODAY WE TALK ABOUT AGRICULTURE AS AN INDUSTRY--A BIG OPERATION.

THAT REMINDS ME OF A BOY I KNOW WHO UNDERSTANDS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A FARMER IN THE TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD. WHEN THIS BOY WAS ASKED BY HIS TEACHER TO WRITE A PAPER ABOUT AGRICULTURE, HE SAID, "AGRICULTURE IS A LOT LIKE FARMING, EXCEPT THAT IN FARMING YOU REALLY

HAVE TO WORK AT IT."

YES, FARMERS WORK HARD AND THEY SHOULD BE FULLY COMPENSATED FOR THEIR LABORS. I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT THE FAMILY FARMER IN THIS COUNTRY IS NOT RECEIVING THE ECONOMIC REWARDS HE IS ENTITLED TO WHEN YOU CONSIDER HIS INVESTMENT IN LAND AND EQUIPMENT, LONG HOURS OF LABOR, AND THE RISK WHICH INCLUDES THE UNCERTAINTIES OF WEATHER.

I SPOKE EARLIER ABOUT THE TREMENDOUS CONTRIBUTIONS THE FAMILY FARMER HAS MADE TO AMERICAN WELL-BEING AND PROSPERITY OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS. IT IS DOUBLY AMAZING, THEREFORE, THAT FARMERS ARE THE ONLY GROUP IN THIS COUNTRY TO EARN LESS MONEY THAN 20 YEARS AGO. IT'S TRUE. IN 1947, NET REALIZED FARM INCOME WAS \$17 BILLION. IN 1967 IT WAS \$14.5 BILLION.

IN FACT, THE SHOWING OF ONLY \$14.5 BILLION IN NET REALIZED FARM INCOME IN 1967 WAS A \$1.9 BILLION DROP FROM THE YEAR 1966.

DO YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER GROUP IN OUR SOCIETY THAT TOOK A \$1.9 BILLION PAY CUT LAST YEAR?

LAST FEBRUARY 27, PRESIDENT JOHNSON SENT HIS 1968 FARM MESSAGE TO CONGRESS. IN THAT SPEECH, HE SAID, "SINCE I HAVE BEEN PRESIDENT, I HAVE BEEN PROUD TO SIGN 184 MEASURES DESIGNED TO ASSIST FARMERS AND THE RURAL COMMUNITY."

WHAT HE DID NOT MENTION IS THAT FARM PRICES HAVE GONE UP ONLY A LITTLE IN THE LAST SEVEN YEARS WHILE THE INDEX OF PRICES PAID BY THE FARMER HAS GONE UP 44 POINTS.

WHY HAS THE FARMER FARED SO BADLY?  
IT SEEMS CLEAR TO ME THAT THE FARMER HAS BEEN-- AND STILL IS--A PRIME VICTIM OF INFLATION.

THE FARMER IS CAUGHT IN A BIND. PRODUCTION COSTS HAVE GONE WAY UP. AS A RESULT, THE FARMER IS FAILING TO GET A BIG ENOUGH SLICE OF THE ECONOMIC PIE.

THE GOVERNMENT CAN AND SHOULD HELP THE FARMER. BUT ITS PRINCIPAL ROLE SHOULD BE TO

CREATE THE PROPER LEGISLATIVE CLIMATE FOR  
EFFECTIVE FARM PRICE BARGAINING AND <sup>thereby</sup> FARM SUCCESS.  
CERTAINLY ANY ADMINISTRATION WHICH FOSTERS  
INFLATION IS HURTING THE FARMER, NOT HELPING  
HIM.

IT IS NO ANSWER TO THE FARM  
COST-PRICE SQUEEZE TO MAKE FARMERS DEPENDENT ON  
CHECKS FROM THE U.S. TREASURY. FARMERS SHOULD <sup>and must</sup>  
GET A SATISFACTORY RETURN FROM THE MARKET <sup>place</sup>.

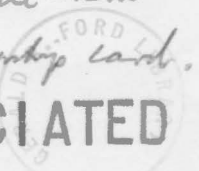
IN THE LONG RUN, A CHEAP FOOD POLICY  
AT THE EXPENSE OF THE FARMER AND THE TAXPAYER  
HURTS THE ENTIRE NATION.

THE FARMER JUST WANTS AN EVEN  
BREAK, AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE EQUITABLY IN THE  
FRUITS OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY.

I HAVE LONG ADMIRERD THE AMERICAN  
FARM BUREAU FOR ITS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE NET  
INCOME OF FARM PEOPLE AND TO MOVE THE FARM  
COMMUNITY AHEAD.

*For nearly 20 yrs I have been an associate member  
of the Farm Bureau & I'm proud of my membership card.*

I AM PROUD TO HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED



WITH FARM PEOPLE WHO HAVE CONSISTENTLY SHOWN GREAT STRENGTH OF CHARACTER AND HAVE TRIED TO HELP THEMSELVES.

*Character of AMERICAN PEOPLE.  
Bur. of Int. Rev.*

YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS DEMONSTRATED HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO DISCUSS AND DEVELOP LOCAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES AND TO SEEK HEALTHY LEGISLATIVE GOALS.

*Community Groups - Resolutions  
Real Democracy in action.*

I ALSO WANT TO COMMEND THE FARM BUREAU FOR SEEKING TO REDUCE FARM PRODUCTION COSTS THROUGH ITS SERVICE TO MEMBERS AND TO IMPROVE FARM INCOME THROUGH BETTER DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING PROGRAMS.

*honestly & effectively*  
1 NOW, WHAT CAN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP FARMERS?

FIRST OF ALL, THERE CAN BE NO HELP UNLESS THE PARTY IN POWER IN WASHINGTON PURSUES SOUND FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICIES, KEEPS THE DOLLAR SOUND, ~~AND HELPS MAINTAIN FAIRLY STABLE PRICES~~ WHILE THE ECONOMY, *& demand at the market place* GROWS AT A HEALTHY RATE.

THIS MEANS INFLATION MUST BE STOPPED-





FOR THE GOOD OF THE FARMER AND EVERY OTHER AMERICAN. THIS IS WHY CONGRESS MUST APPROVE THE SPENDING CUT-TAX INCREASE PACKAGE WHICH WILL COME UP FOR A VOTE EARLY NEXT MONTH. WE MUST PUT A DAMPER ON THE FEDERAL SPENDING EXPLOSION WE HAVE BEEN WITNESSING OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS--THE SPENDING SPIRAL WHICH LIT THE INFLATION SKYROCKET AND SENT PRICES SOARING.

*Pop - up 10% / Fed employees up 25% / cost of payroll up 75%*

*Cost of federal govt - 80% Employees - 454,000 up 4%*

I DON'T LIKE A TAX INCREASE ANY MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE. BUT IF WE DON'T PUT OUR FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER, WE WILL BE INVITING A BOOM-AND-BUST TYPE OF RECESSION. "305"

I'M INSISTING ON A \$6 BILLION SPENDING REDUCTION AND A CEILING ON FUTURE EXPENDITURES. IF CONGRESS DOESN'T DRAW THE LINE, THE REVENUE FROM <sup>Pres. Johnson's</sup> ~~THE~~ TAX INCREASE WILL BECOME THE VEHICLE FOR EVEN GREATER SPENDING.

IF WE SLOW DOWN INFLATION, IT WILL HELP THE FARMER AS WELL AS EVERYONE ELSE.

IN THE AREA OF FARM LEGISLATION,



CONGRESS SHOULD DETERMINE WHAT PROGRAMS ARE WORKING AND WHICH PROGRAMS AREN'T AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.

WHAT THE FARMER NEEDS IS 100 PER CENT OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGHER INCOME. AND MORE OF THE SAME IS NOT THE WAY TO PROVIDE THE FARMER WITH THAT OPPORTUNITY.

THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE RECENTLY VOTED OUT A BILL EXTENDING THE PRESENT BASIC COMMODITIES FARM PROGRAM--THE AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 1965--FOR ONE YEAR. <sup>Frankly</sup> I'M NOT AT ALL HAPPY ABOUT IT. *The only justification - it will give a new administration*

THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ACT OF 1965 HAS NOT WORKED WELL. WHEN THE ACT BECAME EFFECTIVE, THE FARM PARITY RATIO STOOD AT 81. SINCE THEN IT HAS DROPPED STEADILY TO AN <sup>a near all time</sup> ~~ABYSMALLY~~ LOW <sup>of</sup> 73. EVEN THE ADJUSTED PARITY RATIO--WHICH INCLUDES DIRECT PAYMENTS TO FARMERS--HAS DROPPED TO 79 AFTER REACHING 87 IN JANUARY 1966. <sup>a - 8 points in 2 yrs.</sup>

THE ACT OF 1965 HAS FAILED TO EXPAND

DOMESTIC MARKETS AND HAS FAILED TO EXPAND EXPORTS.

*is it sensible*  
~~WHAT SENSE DOES IT MAKE TO KEEP~~  
UNCHANGED A FARM LAW THAT IS <sup>↑</sup>COSTING THE  
TAXPAYERS ROUGHLY \$3 BILLION A YEAR WHEN THE  
BENEFITS TO FARMERS ARE CLEARLY INADEQUATE?

*must*  
~~WE HAVE JUST GOT TO DO BETTER.~~

REPAIR JOBS ON OLD PROGRAMS MAY  
HELP -- ~~BECAUSE~~ CERTAINLY WE CAN PROFIT FROM  
EXPERIENCE. *The <sup>bad</sup> experience of the past several years should  
lead the way to new ideas.*  
FARM MARKET BARGAINING POWER OFFERS  
CONSIDERABLE PROMISE. FOR THAT REASON I WAS  
HAPPY TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION ENACTED BY THE  
CONGRESS THIS YEAR GIVING FARMERS THE RIGHT TO  
JOIN MARKETING OR BARGAINING ASSOCIATIONS  
WITHOUT FEAR OF DISCRIMINATION OR ECONOMIC  
RETALIATION.

FARM BARGAINING POWER HOLDS PROMISE  
WHEN FARMERS GET TOGETHER AND FORM MARKETING  
ASSOCIATIONS, AS YOU FARM BUREAU MEMBERS HERE  
IN MICHIGAN HAVE DONE. I WANT TO COMPLIMENT YOU

FOR YOUR EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION.

I THINK THERE IS REAL HOPE WE WILL FIND WAYS TO CUT FARM PRODUCTION COSTS AND TO IMPROVE FARM PRICES THROUGH NEW FORMS OF MARKET ORGANIZATION AND BETTER COORDINATION OF SUPPLY.

AN EXTENSION OF PUBLIC LAW 480-- WHICH PRESIDENT EISENHOWER AND THE FARM BUREAU INITIATED <sup>in the 1950s</sup> AS THE FOOD FOR PEACE PROGRAM--NOW IS MOVING THROUGH THE CONGRESS. I BELIEVE THIS PROGRAM WILL PRODUCE EVEN GREATER DIVIDENDS FOR THE FARMER THAN IN THE PAST--PARTICULARLY IF IT IS MADE TO OPERATE AS A MORE POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON DOMESTIC FARM PRICES.

WE MUST ALSO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION, PROVIDE AMPLE AGRICULTURAL CREDIT, <sup>at reasonable rates</sup> AND CONTINUE OUR SOIL, WATER, AND FORESTRY CONSERVATION AND SERVICE PROGRAMS.

THERE IS MUCH TALK ABOUT THE



PROBLEMS OF THE CITIES--AND THOSE PROBLEMS ARE  
INDEED GRAVE. <sup>Crime rate - "pop" 10% / crime 88%</sup> BUT UNLESS WE FIND A WAY TO PAY  
FAIR PRICES FOR THE PRODUCTION OF FOOD, WE WILL  
SEE AGRICULTURE DEVELOP INTO A CORPORATE  
CONGLOMERATION THAT WILL DUMP THOUSANDS OF  
RURAL PEOPLE INTO THE CITIES AND AGGRAVATE THE  
PROBLEMS ~~THERE~~. <sup>and the urban crisis will get worse.</sup>

WE MUST REVITALIZE OUR RURAL ECONOMY.  
AND WE CAN REBUILD OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES ONLY  
THROUGH NATIONAL POLICIES THAT WILL ASSURE A  
FAIR RETURN TO THE PEOPLE WHO PRODUCE OUR FOOD  
AND FIBER.

YOU HAVE HONORED ME HERE TONIGHT.  
BUT I FEEL IT IS YOU--THE FARMERS OF THIS  
COUNTRY--WHO MOST DESERVE THE ACCOLADES OF  
OTHER AMERICANS. NOT ALONE FOR THE TREMENDOUS  
STRIDES YOU HAVE MADE IN EFFICIENCY OF  
PRODUCTION AND YOUR GREAT CONTRIBUTION IN  
FEEDING THE WORLD. BUT BECAUSE YOU ARE SETTING  
AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL AMERICA.

I HAVE JUST LEARNED OF A SURVEY BY THE GALLUP POLL PEOPLE WHICH SHOWS THAT OF ALL THE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN THE COUNTRY, FARMERS FAR OUTRANK ALL OTHERS IN PERCENTAGE OF THOSE REGISTERED TO VOTE. THE SURVEY SHOWED FARMERS IN THE 21 TO 29 AGE GROUP WITH AN 83 PER CENT RATING ON VOTER REGISTRATION, AS COMPARED WITH ONLY 57 PER CENT FOR THE NEXT HIGHEST OCCUPATIONAL GROUP. *Churchill*

I COMMEND AMERICA'S FARMERS FOR THEIR INTEREST IN GOOD GOVERNMENT AND URGE THAT ALL OTHER AMERICANS IMITATE YOUR WILLINGNESS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. THAT IS THE BEST GUARANTEE THIS NATION HAS FOR ACHIEVING GOVERNMENT WHICH IS TRULY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE.

WITH THE PEOPLE SHOWING THAT KIND OF CONCERN, I WOULD HAVE NO FEAR FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE. I WOULD FEEL CERTAIN THAT WE CAN GAIN NEW CONFIDENCE, RESTORE LAW AND ORDER, AND

-14-

USHER IN A NEW ERA OF EQUAL JUSTICE AND EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FARM PEOPLE OF THIS  
COUNTRY AND FOR ALL AMERICANS.

AGAIN, THANK YOU SO MUCH.

-END-



For Use in Sunday AM's

"ONE HUNDRED PER CENT OF OPPORTUNITY"

I am humbled to think that you have gathered here tonight in my honor. This also makes me feel very proud. And certainly I feel grateful for the privilege of representing you in the Congress of the United States.

I have always tried to do the best job I know how for you--and any time you have any suggestions for me I will be more than happy to hear them. What I am saying is that I want you to help me help you.

In my book, farm people are the salt of the earth. I have always felt very close to them. To me, they are very important people--the first among the chosen.

Let me tell you why you are important.

Agriculture is the largest of the 12 biggest American industries. It leads in assets. It leads in spending for equipment. It leads in number of workers.

It constantly amazes me that our farmers, who make up 10 or 11 per cent of our population, are able to produce enough food and fiber to meet the needs not only of the 224 million people in this country but millions in other nations as well. What a contrast with the Soviet Union, where more than 50 per cent of the people live on the farms but cannot produce enough of the basic necessities for even their own countrymen! This goes to prove the great strength of our free enterprise system.

The American farmer has produced an economic miracle in the last two decades. If the farmer had not greatly increased his efficiency, every American would be paying far more for his food...and enjoying it less.

Agricultural output has gone up 5 per cent a year since 1948 while output per man-hour in manufacturing has increased just 2.7 per cent per year.

Farm production has jumped nearly 40 per cent during the last 20 years. Or, to put it another way, each American farmer today grows enough to feed 40 people, compared to only 12 in 1948.

Who accomplished this miracle? It was the family-sized farm.

Today we talk about agriculture as an industry--a big operation.

(more)



That reminds me of a boy I know who understands what it means to be a farmer in the true sense of the word. When this boy was asked by his teacher to write a paper about agriculture, he said: "Agriculture is a lot like farming, except that in farming you really have to work at it."

Yes, farmers work hard and they should be fully compensated for their labors. I don't have to tell you that the family farmer in this country is not receiving the economic rewards he is entitled to when you consider his investment in land and equipment, long hours of labor and the risk which includes the uncertainties of weather.

I spoke earlier about the tremendous contributions the family farmer has made to American well-being and prosperity over the past 20 years. It is doubly amazing, therefore, that farmers are the only group in this country to earn less money than 20 years ago. It's true! In 1947, net realized farm income was \$17 billion. In 1967 it was \$14.5 billion.

In fact, the showing of only \$14.5 billion in net realized farm income in 1967 was a \$1.9 billion drop from the year 1966. Do you know of any other group in our society that took a \$1.9 billion pay cut last year?

Last February 27, President Johnson sent his 1968 Farm Message to Congress. In that speech, he said: "Since I have been President, I have been proud to sign 184 measures designed to assist farmers and the rural community."

What he did not mention is that farm prices have gone up only a little in the last seven years while the index of prices paid by the farmer has gone up 44 points.

Why has the farmer fared so badly? It seems clear to me that the farmer has been--and still is--a prime victim of inflation.

The farmer is caught in a bind. Production costs have gone way up. As a result, the farmer is failing to get a big enough slice of the economic pie.

The government can and should help the farmer, but its principal role should be to create the proper legislative climate for effective farm price bargaining and farm success. Certainly any Administration which fosters inflation is hurting the farmer, not helping him.

It is no answer to the farm cost-price squeeze to make farmers dependent on checks from the U.S. Treasury. Farmers should get a satisfactory return from the market.

In the long run, a cheap food policy at the expense of the farmer and the taxpayer hurts the entire Nation.

(more)

The farmer just wants an even break, an opportunity to share equitably in the fruits of the American economy.

I have long admired the American Farm Bureau for its efforts to improve the net income of farm people and to move the farm community ahead.

I am proud to have been associated with farm people who have consistently shown great strength of character and have tried to help themselves.

Your organization has demonstrated how important it is to discuss and develop local and national issues and to seek healthy legislative goals.

I also want to commend the Farm Bureau for seeking to reduce farm production costs through its service to members and to improve farm income through better distribution and marketing programs.

Now, what can the federal government do to help farmers?

First of all, there can be no help unless the party in power in Washington pursues sound fiscal and monetary policies, keeps the dollar sound and helps maintain fairly stable prices while the economy grows at a healthy rate.

This means inflation must be stopped--for the good of the farmer and every other American. This is why Congress must approve the spending cut-tax increase package which will come up for a vote early next month. We must put a damper on the federal spending explosion we have been witnessing over the last several years--the spending spiral which lit the inflation skyrocket and sent prices soaring.

I don't like a tax increase any more than anyone else. But if we don't put our fiscal house in order, we will be inviting a boom-and-bust type of recession.

I'm insisting on a \$6 billion spending reduction and a ceiling on future expenditures. If Congress doesn't draw the line, the revenue from the tax increase will become the vehicle for even greater spending.

If we slow down inflation, it will help the farmer as well as everyone else.

In the area of farm legislation, Congress should determine what programs are working and which programs aren't and act accordingly.

What the farmer needs is 100 per cent opportunity for higher income. And more of the same is not the way to provide the farmer with that opportunity.

The House Agriculture Committee recently voted out a bill extending the present basic commodities farm program--the Agricultural Act of 1965--for one year. I'm not at all happy about it.

The Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 has not worked well. When the Act

(more)

became effective, the farm parity ratio stood at 81. Since then it has dropped steadily to an abysmally low 73. Even the adjusted parity ratio--which includes direct payments to farmers--has dropped to 79 after reaching 87 in January 1966.

The Act of 1965 has failed to expand domestic markets and has failed to expand exports.

What sense does it make to keep unchanged a farm law that is costing the taxpayers roughly \$3 billion a year when the benefits to farmers are clearly inadequate?

We have just got to do better.

Repair jobs on old programs may help--because certainly we can profit from experience.

Farm market bargaining power offers considerable promise. For that reason I was happy to support legislation enacted by the Congress this year giving farmers the right to join marketing or bargaining associations without fear of discrimination or economic retaliation.

Farm bargaining power holds promise when farmers get together and form marketing associations, as you Farm Bureau members here in Michigan have done. I want to compliment you for your efforts in this direction.

I think there is real hope we will find ways to cut farm production costs and to improve farm prices through new forms of market organization and better coordination of supply.

An extension of Public Law 480--which President Eisenhower and the Farm Bureau initiated as the Food for Peace Program--now is moving through the Congress. I believe this program will produce even greater dividends for the farmer than in the past--particularly if it is made to operate as a more positive influence on domestic farm prices.

We must also continue to promote agricultural research and education, provide ample agricultural credit, and continue our soil, water, and forestry conservation and service programs.

There is much talk about the problems of the cities--and those problems are indeed grave. But unless we find a way to pay fair prices for the production of food, we will see agriculture develop into a corporate conglomeration that will dump thousands of rural people into the cities and aggravate the problems there.

We must revitalize our rural economy. And we can rebuild our rural communities only through national policies that will assure a fair return to the people who produce our food and fiber.

(more)

You have honored me here tonight. But I feel it is you--the farmers of this country--who most deserve the accolades of other Americans. Not alone for the tremendous strides you have made in efficiency of production and your great contribution in feeding the world, but because you are setting an example of good citizenship for all America.

I have just learned of a survey by the Gallup Poll people which shows that of all the occupational groups in the country, farmers far outrank all others in percentage of those registered to vote. The survey showed farmers in the 21 to 29 age group with an 83 per cent rating on voter registration, as compared with only 57 per cent for the next highest occupational group.

I commend America's farmers for their interest in good government and urge that all other Americans imitate your willingness to be involved in the democratic process. That is the best guarantee this Nation has for achieving government which is truly representative of the people.

With the people showing that kind of concern, I would have no fear for America's future. I would feel certain that we can gain new confidence, restore law and order, and usher in a new era of equal justice and equal opportunity for the farm people of this country and for all Americans.

Again, thank you so much.

# # #

*M Office Copy*

A SPEECH BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH., BEFORE THE KENT AND IONIA COUNTY FARM BUREAUS, SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 18, 1968, AT WYOMING, MICH.

For Use in Sunday AM's

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I'm insisting on a \$6 billion spending reduction and a ceiling on future expenditures. If Congress doesn't draw the line, the revenue from the tax increase will become the vehicle for even greater spending.

If we slow down inflation, it will help the farmer as well as everyone else.

In the area of farm legislation, Congress should determine what programs are working and which programs aren't and act accordingly.

What the farmer needs is 100 per cent opportunity for higher income. And more of the same is not the way to provide the farmer with that opportunity.

The House Agriculture Committee recently voted out a bill extending the present basic commodities farm program--the Agricultural Act of 1965--for one year. I'm not at all happy about it.

The Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 has not worked well. When the Act

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became effective, the farm parity ratio stood at 81. Since then it has dropped steadily to an abysmally low 73. Even the adjusted parity ratio--which includes direct payments to farmers--has dropped to 79 after reaching 87 in January 1966.

The Act of 1965 has failed to expand domestic markets and has failed to expand exports.

What sense does it make to keep unchanged a farm law that is costing the taxpayers roughly \$3 billion a year when the benefits to farmers are clearly inadequate?

We have just got to do better.

Repair jobs on old programs may help--because certainly we can profit from experience.

Farm market bargaining power offers considerable promise. For that reason I was happy to support legislation enacted by the Congress this year giving farmers the right to join marketing or bargaining associations without fear of discrimination or economic retaliation.

Farm bargaining power holds promise when farmers get together and form marketing associations, as you Farm Bureau members here in Michigan have done. I want to compliment you for your efforts in this direction.

I think there is real hope we will find ways to cut farm production costs and to improve farm prices through new forms of market organization and better coordination of supply.

An extension of Public Law 480--which President Eisenhower and the Farm Bureau initiated as the Food for Peace Program--now is moving through the Congress. I believe this program will produce even greater dividends for the farmer than in the past--particularly if it is made to operate as a more positive influence on domestic farm prices.

We must also continue to promote agricultural research and education, provide ample agricultural credit, and continue our soil, water, and forestry conservation and service programs.

There is much talk about the problems of the cities--and those problems are indeed grave. But unless we find a way to pay fair prices for the production of food, we will see agriculture develop into a corporate conglomeration that will dump thousands of rural people into the cities and aggravate the problems there.

We must revitalize our rural economy. And we can rebuild our rural communities only through national policies that will assure a fair return to the people who produce our food and fiber.

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You have honored me here tonight. But I feel it is you--the farmers of this country--who most deserve the accolades of other Americans. Not alone for the tremendous strides you have made in efficiency of production and your great contribution in feeding the world, but because you are setting an example of good citizenship for all America.

I have just learned of a survey by the Gallup Poll people which shows that of all the occupational groups in the country, farmers far outrank all others in percentage of those registered to vote. The survey showed farmers in the 21 to 29 age group with an 83 per cent rating on voter registration, as compared with only 57 per cent for the next highest occupational group.

I commend America's farmers for their interest in good government and urge that all other Americans imitate your willingness to be involved in the democratic process. That is the best guarantee this Nation has for achieving government which is truly representative of the people.

With the people showing that kind of concern, I would have no fear for America's future. I would feel certain that we can gain new confidence, restore law and order, and usher in a new era of equal justice and equal opportunity for the farm people of this country and for all Americans.

Again, thank you so much.

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