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CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU
FEDERATION, 11 A.M. TUESDAY, JAN. 15,
1974, ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.

"Fellow Farm Bureau" members.



IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME ONCE
AGAIN TO ATTEND A CONVENTION OF THE
AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION. ROGER
FLEMING WAS KIND ENOUGH TO SEND ME AN
ADVANCE COPY OF HIS ANNUAL REPORT AND SO
I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY COVERED MOST
OF THE POLITICAL GROUND THIS MORNING UNDER
HIS EXPERT GUIDANCE.

THERE IS REALLY VERY LITTLE THAT I CAN ADD TO HIS COMPREHENSIVE RUNDOWN BUT I DO HAVE A FEW THOUGHTS THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT ALTHOUGH MY JOB HAS CHANGED SINCE THE LAST TIME WE MET TOGETHER, MY INTEREST IN A FAIR DEAL FOR THE AMERICAN FARMER HAS NOT *and never* WILL.



AS A CONGRESSMAN I MET ^{frequently} ~~NEARLY~~
~~EVERY FALL~~ WITH THE MEMBERS OF MY LOCAL
FARM BUREAU ^{& individual community groups} AND DISCUSSED THE PROBLEMS AND
CHALLENGES THEY FACED EACH YEAR. I ALWAYS
ENJOYED THOSE SESSIONS AND I KNOW THAT THEY
HELPED ME TO DO MY JOB BETTER IN WASHINGTON.

I ALSO LIKE TO THINK THAT THEY
HELPED ME TO BE A FAIR AND EFFECTIVE
SPOKESMAN FOR THE UNSUNG HERO OF OUR
ECONOMY -- THE AMERICAN FARMER. ON THAT
SCORE, I THINK MY LEGISLATIVE RECORD
SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.



LOOKING BACK AT THOSE MEETINGS
OVER THE YEARS, I FOUND THAT SEVERAL THINGS
STOOD OUT MOST VIVIDLY. ONE WAS THE SHARP
GOOD BUSINESS SENSE OF BUREAU MEMBERS.
THEY ALWAYS KNEW WHAT WAS GOOD FOR THE
AMERICAN FARMER. *and for America.*



SECONDLY, THEY WERE GOOD, SOLID
MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY -- THE KIND OF
PEOPLE YOU INSTINCTIVELY LOOKED UP TO.
THEY HAD FAITH IN THEMSELVES AND THEIR WAY
OF LIFE, *a wise politician* AND YOU RESPECTED THEM FOR IT.

BUT, WHAT IMPRESSED ME MOST OF ALL WAS THEIR SENSE OF CITIZENSHIP. SURE, THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED AS FARMERS -- KNEW HOW TO DRIVE A FAIR BARGAIN IN THE MARKET PLACE AND IN THE POLITICAL ARENA.

BUT THEY ALSO KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED AS AMERICANS. AND, TIME AND AGAIN,
WHAT THEY WANTED FOR AMERICA WAS THE RIGHT
THING.



THEY LOVED THIS COUNTRY AS ONLY
THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK ON THE LAND ITSELF
KNOW HOW TO LOVE IT. AND WHENEVER IT CAME
TO A SHOWDOWN, THEY ALWAYS PUT THE
COUNTRY'S INTEREST FIRST, IN WAR AND PEACE.

IN THE 25 YEARS I MET WITH THEM,
I NEVER ONCE KNEW THEM TO LET AMERICA
DOWN AND I STILL TAKE PRIDE IN OUR LONG
AND FRUITFUL ASSOCIATION. *So, if I may, let
me express to Elton Smith + my farm bureau
friends at home my deep appreciation for their
hospitality and many kindnesses.*



NOW I COME BEFORE YOU IN A NEW YEAR, HOLDING A NEW JOB, AND BEARING A NEW RESPONSIBILITY. I HOPE THAT I CAN COUNT ON YOUR GOOD WILL AND YOUR GOOD COUNSEL IN MY NEW MISSION JUST AS I DID IN MY OLD ONE.

Telephone

AS YOU KNOW, I CAME INTO THE VICE PRESIDENCY AT A VERY PAINFUL TIME FOR ALL AMERICANS, AT THE END OF A VERY DIFFICULT YEAR. FOR ME, THE PROSPECT WAS AS SOBERING AS IT WAS EXHILARATING.



NOW, AS WE ENTER 1974, AMERICA STILL HAS MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF PROBLEMS -- SOME OF THEM VERY BIG PROBLEMS -- AND IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO TRY TO CONCEAL THEM.



BUT IN THE WEEKS SINCE I WAS NOMINATED TO THE VICE PRESIDENCY I HAVE MET WITH AND TALKED TO THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. I HAVE ALSO TALKED WITH SCORES OF MY FORMER COLLEAGUES IN THE CONGRESS.

AND EVERYTHING I HAVE SEEN AND
HEARD CONVINCES ME THAT, AS ROGER FLEMING
PUT IT TO YOU EARLIER THIS MORNING, AMERICA
MAY BE A LITTLE BIT DOWN, BUT AMERICA IS
FAR FROM OUT.



THIS IS A VIBRANT, DYNAMIC
COUNTRY. OUR PEOPLE ARE PROBLEM-SOLVERS,
NOT GRUMBLERS OR FATALISTS. WE ARE GOING
TO SEE THINGS THROUGH, *not for selfish gain but*
for our Nation + Those That follow.

ALREADY, WE HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE
PROGRESS.

CONSIDER THE PLIGHT OF THE
AMERICAN FARMER, FOR EXAMPLE. TEN YEARS
AGO, IT LOOKED AS IF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE
WAS DOOMED TO A FUTURE OF TOTAL GOVERNMENT
DOMINATION. IT SEEMED INEVITABLE THAT
EVERY AMERICAN FARMER WOULD EVENTUALLY
BECOME A KIND OF SERF TO THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT, RECEIVING FEDERAL SUBSIDIES
AND FEDERALLY-DICTATED ORDERS FOR EVERY
SEED HE PLANTED AND EVERY ACRE HE LEFT
FALLOW. THE MONEY PICTURE, THE FINANCIAL
FUTURE, WAS ALSO BLEAK.



TODAY THE AMERICAN FARMER, LIKE
OTHER AMERICANS, STILL FACES A NUMBER OF
PROBLEMS. BUT, TODAY, HE IS ALSO ENJOYING
A NEW MEASURE OF BOTH FREEDOM AND
PROSPERITY.



HE HAS JUST SET A NEW RECORD IN
THE PRODUCTION OF "FARM FOOD AND GOODS" FOR
THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW.

AND, IN THE FIRST TEN MONTHS OF 1973 ALONE, THE AMERICAN FARMER PRODUCED ENOUGH FOOD AND FIBER TO PERMIT A RECORD EXPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS --

\$13.6 BILLION WORTH. THAT WAS ENOUGH TO PULL OUR 1973 TRADE BALANCE OUT OF THE RED AND BACK INTO THE PLUS COLUMN.



OR, CONSIDER THE ENERGY CRISIS. RIGHT NOW, THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE INDUSTRIAL WORLD, THIS PROBLEM IS MAKING ITSELF FELT WITH DEVASTATING EFFECT.

AMERICA HAS NOT BEEN IMMUNE. YET BY COMPARISON WITH THE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE AND JAPAN, WHICH DEPEND ON IMPORTED FUELS FOR ALMOST ALL OF THEIR ENERGY, WE ARE IN PRETTY GOOD SHAPE.

WE ARE HURTING A LITTLE, BUT WE ARE FAR FROM CRIPPLED.



THE AMERICAN COAST AND CONTINENT ARE RICH IN UNTAPPED SOURCES OF ENERGY, AND AMERICAN SKILL AND KNOW-HOW ARE SECOND TO NONE IN THEIR ABILITY TO EXTRACT AND UTILIZE THEM.

AT THE SAME TIME, AMERICAN
SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING EXPERTISE -- THE
SAME TECHNOLOGICAL BRILLIANCE THAT PLACED
MEN ON THE MOON -- IS DEVELOPING NEW ENERGY
SOURCES. OUR SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICIANS
HAVE NEVER FAILED US. AND THEY WON'T IN

THE FUTURE. ^{I predict} America will achieve, under Pres. Nixon's
program, self sufficiency in ENERGY by 1980, maybe sooner.

OF COURSE THERE IS ANOTHER
PROBLEM ON MANY MINDS AS WE GATHER HERE
TODAY. IT IS NOT SO MUCH A MATERIAL PROBLEM
AS WE MENTAL ONE. IT IS A MATTER OF
ATTITUDES, MORALE AND, MOST OF ALL,



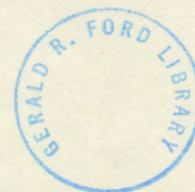
A MATTER OF CONFIDENCE -- CONFIDENCE IN THE
PRESIDENCY AND CONFIDENCE IN THE AMERICAN
POLITICAL SYSTEM AS A WHOLE.



Regrettably ACCORDING TO SOME OF THE POLLS,
THAT CONFIDENCE HAS SELDOM BEEN LOWER.

THE POLLS ARE BAD ENOUGH, BUT A
FEW EXTREME PARTISANS SEEM DETERMINED TO
MAKE THEM WORSE -- SEEM BENT ON STRETCHING
OUT THE ORDEAL OF WATERGATE FOR THEIR OWN
PURPOSES, WHATEVER THEY MIGHT BE.

WHILE THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU
FEDERATION IS MEETING HERE TO DISCUSS
SOLVING SOME OF THE NATION'S PROBLEMS, A
COALITION OF GROUPS LIKE THE AFL-CIO, THE
AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION AND OTHER
POWERFUL PRESSURE ORGANIZATIONS IS WAGING
A MASSIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.



AND MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT -- IT
IS AN ALL-OUT ATTACK. THEIR AIM IS TOTAL
VICTORY FOR THEMSELVES, AND THE TOTAL DEFEAT
NOT ONLY OF PRESIDENT NIXON, BUT OF THE
POLICIES FOR WHICH HE STANDS.

IF THEY CAN CRUSH THE PRESIDENT
AND HIS PHILOSOPHY, THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT
THEY CAN THEN DOMINATE THE CONGRESS, AND
THROUGH IT, THE NATION.

SHOULD THAT DAY EVER COME, WE CAN
ALL KISS GOODBYE THE CHANCES OF REDUCING
FEDERAL SPENDING AND INCREASING COMMUNITY
AND INDIVIDUAL INDEPENDENCE.



SHOULD THAT DAY EVER COME -- WITH
THE SUPER-WELFARE STATERS IN CONTROL OF THE
CONGRESS, AND THE WHITE HOUSE NEUTRALIZED
AS A BALANCING FORCE -- WE CAN EXPECT AN
AVALANCHE OF FRESH GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION
IN OUR ECONOMY, MASSIVE NEW GOVERNMENT
SPENDING, HIGHER TAXES AND MORE RAMPANT
INFLATION.



THE MAJORITY OF RESPONSIBLE,
THINKING AMERICANS MUST NOT LET IT HAPPEN,
AND I DON'T BELIEVE THEY WILL.

SO FAR, ~~I THINK~~ THE VAST MAJORITY
OF MY FORMER COLLEAGUES IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES HAVE TAKEN A HIGHLY
RESPONSIBLE APPROACH TO THIS MATTER. I HAVE
FAITH THAT MY NEW COLLEAGUES IN THE SENATE
WILL DO THE SAME.



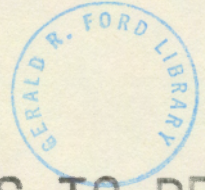
BUT I WOULD ALSO URGE THEM NOT TO
SIT BY WHILE A LESSER, BUT STILL VERY
SERIOUS, EVIL IS PERPETRATED.

FOR IF THE RELATIVELY SMALL GROUP OF ACTIVISTS WHO ARE OUT TO IMPEACH THE PRESIDENT SEE THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DO IT, THEY WILL TRY TO DO THE NEXT MOST DAMAGING THING.



THEY WILL TRY TO STRETCH OUT THE ORDEAL, TO CRIPPLE THE PRESIDENT BY DRAGGING OUT THE PRELIMINARIES TO IMPEACHMENT FOR AS LONG AS THEY CAN, AND TO USE THE WHOLE AFFAIR FOR MAXIMUM POLITICAL ADVANTAGE.

SUCH A COURSE WOULD BE BAD FOR
THE CONGRESS, BAD FOR THE PRESIDENCY AND
BAD FOR THE NATION.



THERE ARE VITAL CHALLENGES TO BE
MET AND PRESSING PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED.
AMERICA HAS NO TIME TO WASTE ON A LONG
DRAWN OUT POLITICAL GRUDGE FIGHT, AND I
THINK THAT MOST CONGRESSMEN OF BOTH PARTIES
AGREE ON THIS.

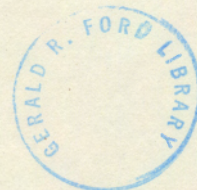
SO, IF THE CONGRESS MUST MOVE,
LET IT MOVE NOW.

IN PARTICULAR, LET THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE ACT PROMPTLY. THERE IS NO REASON WHY THE COMMITTEE CANNOT HAVE FINISHED ITS JOB BY THE END OF APRIL, AS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RODINO INDICATED TO HOUSE MINORITY LEADER RHODES.



PERSONALLY, I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT NO VALID GROUNDS EXIST FOR IMPEACHMENT OF THE PRESIDENT. I BELIEVE THAT A MAJORITY OF THE COMMITTEE WILL REACH THE SAME CONCLUSION. BUT, WHATEVER THEIR FEELINGS, THEY OWE IT TO ALL OF US TO DO THEIR JOB PROMPTLY AND RESPONSIBLY.

THEY HAVE NO RIGHT TO LEAVE
AMERICA HANGING, WHEN SO MUCH THAT IS
IMPORTANT REMAINS TO BE DONE.



THAT IS WHAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
ARE TELLING THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES,
AGAIN AND AGAIN, DURING THE HOLIDAY BREAK.
SETTLE WATERGATE, THEY SAY. WRITE THE LAST
CHAPTER; CLOSE THE BOOK, AND GET ON WITH
THE VITAL BUSINESS OF THE NATION.

IT IS HIGH TIME WE DID JUST THAT.
IT IS HIGH TIME WE GOT OUT OF THE RUT OF
DESPAIR AND SELF-DOUBT AND BACK ONTO THE
HIGH ROAD OF PROGRESS. ONCE WE DO THAT,
AMERICA IS BOUND TO SUCCEED.



① THIS IS THE SAME COUNTRY AND THE
SAME PRESIDENT THAT MANAGED TO ACHIEVE AN
HONORABLE END TO AMERICA'S LONGEST WAR.

②

THIS IS THE SAME COUNTRY AND THE
SAME PRESIDENT THAT HAVE BUILT NEW AND
PROMISING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION,
REPRESENTING OVER A BILLION PEOPLE.



③

THIS IS THE SAME COUNTRY AND THE
SAME PRESIDENT THAT HAVE HELPED TO LAY THE
GROUNDWORK FOR A LASTING PEACE IN THE
STRIFE-TORN MIDDLE EAST AFTER A GENERATION
OF HATRED AND VIOLENCE.

NONE OF THOSE THINGS HAPPENED BY
ACCIDENT.

THEY HAPPENED BECAUSE A WISE AND
GOOD PEOPLE WERE LED BY A WISE AND GOOD
PRESIDENT.



NO ONE IS PERFECT -- NO NATIONALITY
AND NO EXECUTIVE.

BUT WHEN YOU LOOK BACK ON THE PAST
YEARS OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION AND THINK
OF THESE REALLY MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENTS,
THEN WATERGATE NO LONGER DOMINATES THE
LANDSCAPE.



COMPARED WITH THESE MOUNTAINOUS
ACHIEVEMENTS, IT'S A TRAGIC BUT GROTESQUE
SIDESHOW. *Watergate*

SO I URGE EACH OF YOU, AS
INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS AND AS MEMBERS OF THE
AMERICAN FARM COMMUNITY: DO EVERYTHING YOU
CAN TO FOCUS THE ENERGY AND THE ABILITY OF
THE COUNTRY AND THE CONGRESS WHERE THEY CAN
DO THE MOST GOOD -- AS FORCES FOR UNITY
INSTEAD OF DIVISION.



IN THE QUARTER CENTURY THAT I
SERVED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THERE
WAS ONE MAN WHO LEFT HIS MARK ON THE HOUSE
MORE THAN ANY OTHER -- SPEAKER SAM RAYBURN.

HE CAME FROM FARM COUNTRY IN TEXAS AND HE
ONCE SAID THAT THE ONLY THING BESIDES PEOPLE
THAT HE CLAIMED TO KNOW WAS THE LAND.

IN HIS STERN WAY, HE HAD A DEEP
LOVE FOR BOTH -- THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND --
AND A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH.



THOUGH WE HAD SOME FRIENDLY
DISAGREEMENTS ON LEGISLATIVE PARTICULARS,
I LIKE TO THINK THAT SOME OF SPEAKER
RAYBURN'S AFFECTION AND UNDERSTANDING RUBBED
OFF ON ME DURING MY YEARS ON CAPITOL HILL.

I THINK THAT THEY GAVE ME, TOO,
A KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF OUR PEOPLE AND OUR
LAND. THIS LAND OF OURS IS STILL GOOD, AND
SO ARE OUR PEOPLE. I KNOW THIS IN MY HEART.
AND THAT IS WHY I REMAIN AN UNASHAMED,
UNABASHED OPTIMIST ABOUT AMERICA.



EDWARD EVERETT HALE, THE 19TH
CENTURY AMERICAN AUTHOR WHO WROTE THE
FAMOUS STORY OF THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY
ALSO WROTE A FEW LINES OF ADVICE THAT I
THINK ALL OF US COULD PROFIT FROM AS

AMERICA BEGINS THIS VERY DIFFICULT BUT
POTENTIALLY PROMISING NEW YEAR OF 1974.
HALE URGED US TO:

“ . . . LOOK UP AND NOT DOWN
TO LOOK FORWARD AND NOT BACK,
TO LOOK OUT AND NOT IN, AND
TO LEND A HAND.”



IF ALL OF US IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC
LIFE CAN LIVE WITH THAT SPIRIT IN THE YEAR
AHEAD -- AND I BELIEVE WE CAN -- THEN
WATERGATE, ENERGY AND ANY OTHER PROBLEM THAT
COMES DOWN THE ROAD NEED HOLD NO FEAR FOR
AMERICA.

WE HAVE FACED WORSE PROBLEMS IN
THE PAST AS A UNITED, DETERMINED AND
COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE, AND ALWAYS, AS LONG
AS OUR UNITY, OUR DETERMINATION AND OUR
COMPASSION HELD FIRM, WE HAVE SUCCEEDED.
WE CAN AND WILL DO SO AGAIN.



-- END --

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.



PRESS ON THE ATLANTIC CITY TRIP

1/15/74

Clifford Evans -- RKO General

George Orteiz -- NEWS Photo

Phil Jones -- CBS

Mike Georhe -- CBS

Al Colby -- CBS

Harry Clark -- CBS

Lowell Gayman -- CBS

AN ADDRESS BY VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD
AT A CONVENTION
OF THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY
11 a.m. TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1974



ADVANCE FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

It is a pleasure for me once again to attend a convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Roger Fleming was kind enough to send me an advance copy of his annual report and so I know that you already covered most of the political ground this morning under his expert guidance.

There is really very little that I can add to his comprehensive rundown but I do have a few thoughts that I would like to share with you.

In the first place, I want you to know that although my job has changed since the last time we met together, my interest in a fair deal for the American farmer has not.

As a Congressman I met nearly every fall with the members of my local Farm Bureau and discussed the problems and challenges they faced each year. I always enjoyed those sessions and I know that they helped me to do my job better in Washington.

I also like to think that they helped me to be a fair and effective spokesman for the unsung hero of our economy -- the American farmer. On that score, I think my legislative record speaks for itself.

Looking back at those meetings over the years, I found that several things stood out most vividly. One was the sharp good business sense of bureau members. They always knew what was good for the American farmer.

Secondly, they were good, solid members of the community -- the kind of people you instinctively looked up to. They had faith in themselves and their way of life, and you respected them for it.

But, what impressed me most of all was their sense of citizenship. Sure, they knew what they wanted as farmers -- knew how to drive a fair bargain in the market place and in the political arena.

(more)

But they also knew what they wanted as Americans. And, time and again, what they wanted for America was the right thing.

They loved this country as only those who live and work on the land itself know how to love it. And whenever it came to a showdown, they always put the country's interest first, in war and peace.

In the 25 years I met with them, I never once knew them to let America down and I still take pride in our long and fruitful association.

Now I come before you in a new year, holding a new job, and bearing a new responsibility. I hope that I can count on your good will and your good counsel in my new mission just as I did in my old one.

As you know, I came into the Vice Presidency at a very painful time for all Americans, at the end of a very difficult year. For me, the prospect was as sobering as it was exhilarating.

Now, as we enter 1974, America still has more than its share of problems -- some of them very big problems -- and it would be foolish to try to conceal them.

But in the weeks since I was nominated to the Vice Presidency I have met with and talked to thousands of people from all parts of the country and from all walks of life. I have also talked with scores of my former colleagues in the Congress.

And everything I have seen and heard convinces me that, as Roger Fleming put it to you earlier this morning, America may be a little bit down, but America is far from out.

This is a vibrant, dynamic country. Our people are problem-solvers, not grumblers or fatalists. We are going to see things through.

Already, we have made considerable progress.

Consider the plight of the American farmer, for example. Ten years ago, it looked as if American agriculture was doomed to a future of total Government domination. It seemed inevitable

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that every American farmer would eventually become a kind of serf to the Federal Government, receiving Federal subsidies and federally-dictated orders for every seed he planted and every acre he left fallow. The money picture, the financial future, was also bleak.

Today the American farmer, like other Americans, still faces a number of problems. But, today, he is also enjoying a new measure of both freedom and prosperity.

He has just set a new record in the production of farm food and goods for the third year in a row.

And, in the first ten months of 1973 alone, the American farmer produced enough food and fiber to permit a record export of agricultural products -- \$13.6 billion worth. That was enough to pull our 1973 trade balance out of the red and back into the plus column.

Or, consider the energy crisis. Right now, throughout the entire industrial world, this problem is making itself felt with devastating effect.

America has not been immune. Yet by comparison with the countries of Western Europe and Japan, which depend on imported fuels for almost all of their energy, we are in pretty good shape.

We are hurting a little, but we are far from crippled.

The American coast and continent are rich in untapped sources of energy, and American skill and know-how are second to none in their ability to extract and utilize them.

At the same time, American scientific and engineering expertise -- the same technological brilliance that placed men on the moon -- is developing new energy sources. Our scientists and technicians have never failed us. And they won't in the future.

Of course there is another problem on many minds as we gather here today. It is not so much a material problem as a mental one. It is a matter of attitudes, morale and, most of all, a matter of confidence -- confidence in the Presidency and

(more)

confidence in the American political system as a whole.

According to some of the polls, that confidence has seldom been lower.

The polls are bad enough, but a few extreme partisans seem determined to make them worse -- seem bent on stretching out the ordeal of Watergate for their own purposes, whatever they might be.

While the American Farm Bureau Federation is meeting here to discuss solving some of the Nation's problems, a coalition of groups like the AFL-CIO, the Americans for Democratic Action and other powerful pressure organizations is waging a massive propaganda campaign against the President of the United States.

And make no mistake about it -- it is an all-out attack. Their aim is total victory for themselves, and the total defeat not only of President Nixon, but of the policies for which he stands.

If they can crush the President and his philosophy, they are convinced that they can then dominate the Congress, and through it, the Nation.

Should that day ever come, we can all kiss goodbye the chances of reducing Federal spending and increasing community and individual independence.

Should that day ever come -- with the super-welfare staters in control of the Congress, and the White House neutralized as a balancing force -- we can expect an avalanche of fresh Government intervention in our economy, massive new Government spending, higher taxes and a more rampant inflation.

The majority of responsible, thinking Americans must not let it happen, and I don't believe they will.

So far, I think the vast majority of my former colleagues in the House of Representatives have taken a highly responsible approach to this matter. I have faith that my new colleagues in the Senate will do the same.

But I would also urge them not to sit by while a lesser, but still very serious, evil is perpetrated.

(more)

For if the relatively small group of activists who are out to impeach the President see that they do not have the strength to do it, they will try to do the next most damaging thing.

They will try to stretch out the ordeal, to cripple the President by dragging out the preliminaries to impeachment for as long as they can, and to use the whole affair for maximum political advantage.

Such a course would be bad for the Congress, bad for the Presidency and bad for the Nation.

There are vital challenges to be met and pressing problems to be solved. America has no time to waste on a long drawn out political grudge fight, and I think that most Congressmen of both parties agree on this.

So, if the Congress must move, let it move now.

In particular, let the House Judiciary Committee act promptly. There is no reason why the committee cannot have finished its job by the end of April, as Committee Chairman Rodino indicated to House Minority Leader Rhodes.

Personally, I firmly believe that no valid grounds exist for impeachment of the President. I believe that a majority of the committee will reach the same conclusion. But, whatever their feelings, they owe it to all of us to do their job promptly and responsibly.

They have no right to leave America hanging, when so much that is important remains to be done.

That is what the American people are telling their elected representatives, again and again, during the holiday break. Settle Watergate, they say. Write the last chapter; close the book, and get on with the vital business of the Nation.

It is high time we did just that. It is high time we got out of the rut of despair and self-doubt and back onto the high road of progress. Once we do that, America is bound to succeed.

(more)

This is the same country and the same President that managed to achieve an honorable end to America's longest war.

This is the same country and the same President that have built new and promising relationships with the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, representing over a billion people.

This is the same country and the same President that have helped to lay the groundwork for a lasting peace in the strife-torn Middle East after a generation of hatred and violence.

None of those things happened by accident.

They happened because a wise and good people were led by a wise and good President.

No one is perfect -- no nationality and no executive.

But when you look back on the past years of the Nixon Administration and think of these really magnificent achievements, then Watergate no longer dominates the landscape.

Compared with these mountainous achievements, it's a tragic but grotesque sideshow.

So I urge each of you, as individual citizens and as members of the American farm community: Do everything you can to focus the energy and the ability of the country and the Congress where they can do the most good -- as forces for unity instead of division.

In the quarter century that I served in the House of Representatives there was one man who left his mark on the House more than any other -- Speaker Sam Rayburn. He came from farm country in Texas and he once said that the only thing besides people that he claimed to know was the land.

In his stern way, he had a deep love for both -- the people and the land -- and a deep understanding of both.

Though we had some friendly disagreements on legislative particulars, I like to think that some of Speaker Rayburn's affection and understanding rubbed off on me during my years on Capitol Hill.

I think that they gave me, too, a knowledge and love of our

(more)

people and our land. This land of ours is still good, and so are our people. I know this in my heart. And that is why I remain an unashamed, unabashed optimist about America.

Edward Everett Hale, the 19th century American author who wrote the famous story of The Man Without a Country also wrote a few lines of advice that I think all of us could profit from as America begins this very difficult but potentially promising new year of 1974. Hale urged us to:

" . . . look up and not down
To look forward and not back,
To look out and not in, and
To lend a hand."



If all of us in private and public life can live with that spirit in the year ahead -- and I believe we can -- then Watergate, energy and any other problem that comes down the road need hold no fear for America.

We have faced worse problems in the past as a united, determined and compassionate people, and always, as long as our unity, our determination and our compassion held firm, we have succeeded. We can and will do so again.

#