

The original documents are located in Box 135, folder “Aug. 6, 1974 - Speech, National Conference for Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Washington, DC” of the Gerald R. Ford Vice Presidential Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD
NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE
STATLER HILTON HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.
11:00 A.M., TUESDAY, AUGUST 6, 1974



FOR RELEASE IN TUESDAY PM'S

I am pleased to participate in this important meeting of the leadership of America's agriculture.

Our Nation owes much to agriculture. But we understand it very little. In agriculture we find the highest development of free enterprise and an incentive-oriented society. People farm their own land; set their own hours; determine their daily tasks; keep up with rapid technological advances; market their own products; manage their own finances; plan production to anticipate demand a season in advance; contend with weather, weeds, insects, and disease; and meanwhile build modern rural communities that form the proudest aspect of America's heartland.

A good share of my old Congressional district was a rural-oriented part of Michigan. All my adult life I have worked with farm people and farm groups. I know of your work and dedication.

You have contributed to a sound society, a dynamic Nation, and a viable economy.

You have increased your productivity per person at twice the rate of industrial America. You made Americans the best-fed people in the world.

Agriculture today is a major factor in fighting the inflation that besets us.

At the very time that adverse weather limited production, a world-wide industrial boom increased food demand. Yet American agriculture was so productive we nevertheless got our food in 1973 for the same percentage of our take-home pay as in 1972. That percentage marked the lowest level in our history. It was lower than any other major nation of the world.

You have achieved this growth in productivity while releasing large numbers of people from the land to go into other gainful pursuits.

According to the Department of Agriculture, Americans can meet their food needs with 15.7 percent of their take-home pay. This permits the spending of 84.3 percent for other needs and niceties of life. No other Nation can do as well.

~~Without the offsetting favorable balance from agricultural trade, the value~~

of the dollar would have suffered more, increased petroleum costs would have been a worse burden, and our basic international strength would have eroded.

Agriculture has been a great ally in the battle against Public Enemy Number One — inflation. And we need all the allies we can get. There is deep concern among Americans and other peoples. Our economies are interrelated. We have promoted peace in cooperation with other Nations. We must seek a new international era in monetary and trade agreement. This Administration has made achievements abroad that provide a solid base for such progress.

At home, however, it is apparent that we must strive for a new confidence in our domestic capacity to deal with inflation. We have made economic predictions that turned out wrong. We have all made mistakes. But instead of dwelling upon the errors of the past, let us unite and cooperate to face the future. Let us seek a new sense of confidence in ourselves and in our Nation.

All the victims of inflation — business and labor, agriculture and industry, employed and unemployed, Democrats and Republicans — must rally as Americans against any further erosion of the buying power of the American dollar. The Government, of course, has a special responsibility to provide leadership by example. Restoration of economic confidence requires willingness to cooperate for the common good. We must generate and deserve that confidence.

In unity there is strength. The motto of the United States is E Pluribus Unum — "one out of many." Yet we are at this moment in history a fragmented Nation. Passions are high. Public opinion is divided.

At the very moment when we must mobilize all elements to cope with serious inflation, the President is the subject of Congressional impeachment. These proceedings are in full accordance with our Constitutional processes. Reasonable and just people are differing on the impeachment issue. It will be resolved, in the American way, by a process of voting in the Congress. But reasonable and just people are also capable of simultaneously joining in a national, non-political campaign against inflation despite their other legitimate involvement.

Neither impeachment nor the November election campaign must interfere with immediate bipartisan efforts to bring inflation under control.

Leaders of this Administration have a responsibility to provide effective leadership — especially in the economic area — regardless of the pending



impeachment issue. Until impeachment is resolved one way or another, we must lose no time in dealing with inflation.

We simply cannot afford to let inflation continue to infiltrate while our attention is totally diverted by a single topic. America is capable of coping with two great challenges simultaneously. This is the same Nation that dealt in World War Two with two external situations at the same time, in the Pacific as well as the Atlantic. Today our peril is not from war but from domestic emotions that could distort our focus and concentration.

When the eagle on the dollar screams, the cry must be heeded by all Americans. Inflation cannot be defeated by recrimination and attack from any segment of our society on any other segment. I refer to both business and labor, and the Executive Department as well as the Congress. Let us seek avenues to unity, roads along which we can move together to meet the common enemy.

There are obviously many views and approaches in dealing with inflation. We need to explore a wide spectrum of ideas. I prefer an open and objective spirit of inquiry in which all views are given consideration. Congressional involvement is essential. So is the concentrated determination of the Executive Department. Working together, an example can be set for the Nation.

Let Washington restrain spending, if others are to follow.

Let Washington show the way to increased production.

Let a real partnership of the people and the Government be organized to protect the dollar.

Washington cannot ask others to show restraint unless Government demonstrates its own commitment. Accordingly, we must veto "budget-busting" legislation. We will need political guts to defer programs that are marginally desirable but not really essential. We cannot afford optional luxuries while striving to beat inflation.

The Federal Budget proposed for Fiscal Year 1975 calls for expenditures of \$305 billion. There are already indications that this total is being inflated by actual or potential Congressional proposals to as much as \$312 billion. We cannot tolerate this increase. It would feed the already fierce fires of inflation.

We must prevent such budget overruns from taking place. Actually, we must also resolve to reduce expenditures below the originally proposed \$305 billion



level. But we cannot do this without the active support of the public, the business community, the labor organizations, and the Congress.

As a Congressman for a quarter-century, I welcome the involvement of Congress in efforts to deal with inflation. It is my deepest wish that a way can be found for us to work together.

If -- through cooperation -- we are able to control expenditures, we will be in a much better position to have a budget next year that will not only be in balance but maybe in surplus. Nothing could be more important in the war against inflation than to achieve a surplus in next year's Government operations.

The importance of reduced expenditures cannot be overestimated. Reduced expenditures mean reduced government borrowing, reduced interest rates, and help for the Federal Reserve in its efforts to slow the inflationary expansion of money and credit.

These are the essentials. Without progress on these essentials, victory in the fight against inflation is beyond our grasp. Even as we persevere on this course we must explore other actions to help relieve inequities.

It serves no purpose to lecture the harrassed public, especially the low and middle income people who have been the main losers from inflation. We are mindful that some people are suffering more than others. Certain groups -- older Americans, persons on fixed incomes, the unemployed -- may require special help within budgetary limitations. Their plight must be heeded.

Certain industries such as the public utilities, housing, financial institutions, and others have been especially hard hit. There are suggested solutions that have merit and deserve prompt consideration. The time has come for action, not doom-saying and hand-wringing.

I have addressed myself to a tough problem requiring tough actions. But I believe in the America I have seen in 115,000 miles of travel in 40 states since becoming Vice President. I believe in the energy of our farms and towns and cities. We possess the highest living standard the world has ever known. Real income has escalated. The lot of the poor and the minority groups has improved dramatically. We have the productive ability and natural resources to overcome inflation. And we also have the American know-how, ability and the courage.

With the help of American agriculture, we can show the Free World that the spirit of "can do" is not dead in America. Let's show them the way to end inflation.

Your expanding food production enables us to promote peace worldwide and to negotiate creatively and compassionately. You have had a hand in turning around our farm program from a policy of restriction to a policy of expansion. We, and the entire world, can be thankful for that foresight.

Challenges remain ahead. But we have a mighty resource in agriculture and we are going to cope with inflation.

On behalf of our Nation, I thank you.

###