

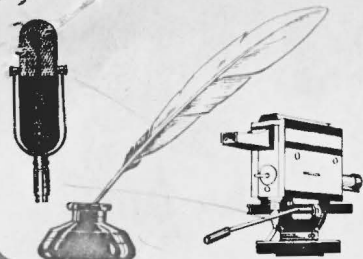
The original documents are located in Box D24, folder “Republican Dinner for Representative James V. Smith, Norman, OK, March 15, 1968” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M. FRIDAY--
March 15, 1968

Excerpts from a speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., at a Republican Dinner for Rep. James V. Smith, R-Okla., Friday evening, March 15, 1968, at Norman, Okla.

The farmer should be the angriest man in America today.

The farmer should be angry because he is a prime victim of Johnson-Freeman Administration inflation.

He should be angry because he is caught in a vicious Johnson-Freeman cost-price squeeze.

He should be angry because Lyndon Johnson wants to freeze him into the farm cost-price squeeze status quo.

Republicans are opposed to Lyndon Johnson's status quo.

Lyndon Johnson's Agriculture Department has predicted that American farmers will be worse off at the end of 1968 than they are today.

Today a comparison of prices the farmer receives for his product and the prices he pays for his supplies tags him as a "leftout" in terms of a fair return for his labors. His income brings him only 74 per cent of parity--and that means he is being cheated.

This is what is happening under present farm policy, and yet Lyndon Johnson and Orville Freeman want to make the present farm program permanent.

To use Lyndon Johnson's favorite phrase, he and Orville Freeman are saying "Let us continue" the policies that would continue farmer income at only 74 per cent of parity. I want a better program; I want full parity of income for farmers.

The farmer needs more bargaining power if he is to have more purchasing power. Lyndon Johnson has asked the Congress to study the possibility of a Bargaining Act for Agriculture. I hope Congress will implement such legislation, not merely study it.

There are proposals before the Congress to create a National Food Bank--a strategic reserve of wheat, feed grains and soybeans. If such a reserve is established, Congress must make certain it will never be used for the kind of commodity-dumping engaged in by the Johnson-Humphrey Administration in 1966 when they drove down farm prices and made the farmer the scapegoat of inflation.

I believe only a new Administration, a Republican Administration, will provide the American farmer with the parity of opportunity he deserves and will so administer our farm programs as to provide the farmer with the full benefits of those programs.

* * *



Let's face it; America is in a mess. Everywhere you look you see the tragic results produced by an Administration which has failed to perform on its promises and has created a crisis of confidence among the American people by putting the best possible face on its catastrophic mistakes.

Look at what is happening in South Vietnam, where the Johnson-Humphrey Administration has bogged this Nation down in a massive land war that Lyndon Johnson doesn't know how to end.

In Latin America the Administration's Alliance for Progress has produced little more than a standstill and, in some cases, foreign aid scandals.

In the Middle East the Johnson-Humphrey Administration has twiddled its thumbs while the Soviet Union has rearmed the Arab nations and extended Soviet influence in that strategic portion of the world.

In Europe, the Johnson-Humphrey Administration has allowed a sundering of the once-strong ties that bound the NATO nations together and has followed a policy marked by drift and indecision.

America has suffered one humiliation after another under the Johnson-Humphrey Administration. Look at the record and compare it with that of President Eisenhower.

Today we are at war in Vietnam. Not seven years ago!

Today serious trouble brews in the Middle East. Not seven years ago!

Today violent civil disorders ravage our cities. Not seven years ago!

Today Communists steal our ships. Not seven years ago!

Today we approach runaway inflation. Not seven years ago!

Today we have the Bobby Bakers, the Tom Dodds and the Adam Clayton Powells and on and on. Not seven years ago!

Today the dollar is going down the drain both at home and abroad. Not seven years ago!

Today the national crime rate keeps going up and up and up. Not seven years ago!

Today we have lost the respect America had throughout the world. Not seven years ago!

The Democratic Party has failed the American people on almost every one of the basic promises it made in 1960 and 1964.

The Democratic Party has failed the young men who were promised they would never be sent to Vietnam to do the job Asian boys should be doing.

The Democratic Party has failed the farmer who was promised his fair share of the fruits of our economy.

The Democratic Party has failed the consumer who was promised price stability.

The Democratic Party has failed the worker who was promised increased purchasing power.

The American people are crying out for new leadership. Republicans will meet the challenge and clean up the mess.