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NATIONAL FARMERS UNION CONVENTION  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA -- MARCH 18, 1968

"THE FAMILY FARM IN THE SPACE AGE"

LET ME SAY AT THE OUTSET THAT I AM  
INDEED VERY PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO  
PARTICIPATE AT THIS IMPORTANT CONVENTION.

THROUGH MY YEARS OF CONGRESSIONAL  
SERVICE, I HAVE ALWAYS HELD YOUR FINE ORGANI-  
ZATION IN GREAT RESPECT, AND THOUGH WE MAY  
HAVE DIFFERED FROM TIME TO TIME, I HAVE ALWAYS  
FELT THE FARMERS UNION HAS SINCERELY AND  
EFFECTIVELY WORKED FOR THE BETTERMENT OF  
FAMILY FARMING IN OUR GREAT NATION.

SOME SKEPTICS HAVE ASKED IN RECENT  
YEARS, "JUST WHAT GOOD IS THE FAMILY FARM  
ANYHOW? ISN'T IT AS OLD FASHIONED AND AS OUT  
OF DATE IN THIS MODERN AGE OF SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY AS THE HORSE AND BUGGY?"

WELL, YOU KNOW AND I KNOW THAT THE FAMILY



FARM IS THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKBONE OF AN AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENT THAT IS THE ENVY OF THE WORLD. I NEED NOT CITE TO YOU ALL THE FIGURES ON THE CONTRIBUTION THAT MODERN FAMILY FARMS ARE MAKING TO THE HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING THAT AMERICA ENJOYS. BUT A FEW REMINDERS MIGHT BE IN ORDER.

THE AMERICAN CONSUMER TODAY IS HARVESTING THE REWARD OF OUR EVER-INCREASINGLY EFFICIENT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND MARKETING SYSTEM. A RECENT REPORT ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SHOWED THAT IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE SHARP GAINS IN FARM EFFICIENCY DURING THE PAST TWO DECADES EVERY AMERICAN WOULD BE PAYING MORE FOR HIS FOOD AND ENJOYING IT LESS,

WHILE THE OUTPUT PER MAN-HOUR IN MANUFACTURING HAS INCREASED 2.7% PER YEAR SINCE 1948. THE OUTPUT IN AGRICULTURE HAS INCREASED BY 5% PER YEAR.

IN 1948, THE NUMBER OF MAN HOURS USED

FOR ALL FARM WORK TOTALED 16.5 BILLION. IN 1966, THIS FIGURE HAD DROPPED TO 7 BILLION MAN HOURS.


FARM PRODUCTION INCREASED NEARLY 40 PER CENT DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

OR, STATED ANOTHER WAY, IN 1948 ONE FARM WORKER SUPPLIED ABOUT 14 OTHERS WITH FOOD AND FIBRE. TODAY HE SUPPLIES 42 OTHERS.

DURING THE SAME TIME, THE NUMBER OF CONSUMERS HAS INCREASED BY 40 PER CENT, WHILE THE NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY INCREASED BY ABOUT 12 PER CENT.

LET US STOP RIGHT HERE AND ASK "WHO PROVIDED THIS MIRACULOUS ECONOMIC GROWTH?" THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS FAMILY-SIZED AGRICULTURAL UNITS.

YET, AS YOU KNOW, THE FAMILY FARMER IN THIS COUNTRY HAS NOT SHARED IN THE ECONOMIC REWARDS THAT SHOULD BE HIS FOR THESE TREMENDOUS CONTRIBUTIONS. FRANKLY, I KNOW OF NO GREAT





ECONOMIC GROUP OF CITIZENS IN OUR SOCIETY WHICH TODAY EARNS LESS MONEY THAN IT DID 20 YEARS AGO . . . NO GROUP, THAT IS, EXCEPT FARMERS. IN 1947, REALIZED NET FARM INCOME WAS \$17.0 BILLION. IN 1967 IT WAS \$14.5 BILLION.

IN THIS PAST YEAR OF 1967, WE HAVE SEEN REALIZED NET FARM INCOME FALL \$1.9 BILLION BELOW THE PREVIOUS YEAR. CAN YOU IMAGINE ANY OTHER GROUP IN OUR SOCIETY TAKING A \$1.9 BILLION PAY CUT.

IN MY HOME STATE OF MICHIGAN, THE DROP WAS 9%. HERE IN MINNESOTA, IT WAS 11%. NET INCOME PER FARM ALSO DROPPED IN SPITE OF A DECLINE OF APPROXIMATELY 100,000 IN THE NUMBER OF FARMS.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE PARITY RATIO. . . . THAT MEASURING ROD OF RELATIVE PROSPERITY IN AGRICULTURE . . . DROPPED TO 74. THIS IS THE LOWEST ANNUAL LEVEL FOR THE PARITY



RATIO SINCE 1933.

IN 1967, OUR AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS WHICH ARE SO IMPORTANT TO THE BALANCE OF TRADE SITUATION WERE DOWN 7% BELOW THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

THE DAIRY IMPORT-EXPORT PICTURE BECAME PARTICULARLY DISTURBING LAST YEAR. IN 1967 THERE WERE 2.9 BILLION POUNDS OF MILK EQUIVALENT IMPORTED, WHILE ONLY 364 MILLION POUNDS WERE EXPORTED. THIS IS MOST DISTURBING IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT JUST FOUR YEARS AGO (IN 1964) OUR DAIRY IMPORTS WERE ONLY 830 MILLION POUNDS OF MILK EQUIVALENT AND OUR EXPORTS WERE A WHOPPING 6.9 BILLION POUNDS.

THESE FIGURES SHOW QUITE DRAMATICALLY AND QUITE PAINFULLY HOW THE AMERICAN DAIRY FARMER HAS BEEN CAUGHT IN A VICIOUS SCISSOR OF RISING IMPORT COMPETITION AND DECLINING EXPORT OPPORTUNITY.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, OTHER ALARMING AND WORRISOME STATISTICS THAT SHOW OUR FARMERS

ARE IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE. BUT I KNOW I NEED NOT REPEAT THE OBVIOUS, SO LET ME SAY ONLY THAT I FOR ONE CERTAINLY REALIZE THE DIFFICULTY.

OF COURSE, RECOGNIZING THE EXISTENCE OF A PROBLEM AND DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.

AS ONE OF MY LADY COLLEAGUES IN THE HOUSE ONCE SAID AT A RULES COMMITTEE HEARING AFTER MEMBERS OF THAT COMMITTEE HAD BESTOWED A SERIES OF FLOWERY ACCOLADES UPON HER, "AH, GENTLEMEN, FIRST THE NOVOCaine. THEN THE NEEDLE."

I THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT THE AVERAGE FAMILY FARM OPERATOR IN THIS COUNTRY IS NOT IN THE SOUNDEST FINANCIAL SITUATION. WHAT THEN CAN WE DO?

LET'S LOOK AT THE POLITICAL REALITIES IN WASHINGTON. A PARTY OTHER THAN THE ONE TO WHICH I BELONG NOW CONTROLS BOTH HOUSES OF THE CONGRESS, AS WELL AS THAT LARGE WHITE



BUILDING ON PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WHERE ALL THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS OF DAY-TO-DAY GOVERNMENT ARE MADE. THAT BEING TRUE, WE MUST FIRST ANALYZE THE PROPOSALS MADE BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS RECENT FARM MESSAGE.

AS YOU RECALL, HE ASKED FOR THE PERMANENT EXTENSION OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 1965. HE ALSO CALLED FOR A THREE-YEAR EXTENSION OF PUBLIC <sup>LAW</sup> 480, THE FOOD FOR PEACE PROGRAM. HE SOUGHT A "FOOD BANK" IN WHICH GRAIN FARMERS WOULD BE THE SOLE DEPOSITORS. HE ASKED FOR HEARINGS TO BE HELD ON FARM BARGAINING. HE CALLED FOR THE ENACTMENT OF NEW PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ACT LEGISLATION AND FINALLY, HE MADE SOME GENERALIZED COMMENTS ABOUT RURAL RENEWAL.

LET ME OFFER A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT EACH OF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS.

IN URGING THE EXTENSION OF THE 1965 ACT THIS YEAR, THE PRESIDENT SAID, AND I QUOTE:



"TO TERMINATE THE 1965 ACT WOULD BRING CATASTROPHE AND RUIN TO MANY FARMERS.

"CASH PRICES TO THE FARMER WOULD FALL-- AND THERE WOULD BE NO GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS TO CUSHION THE IMPACT. FARM INCOME COULD DROP BY AS MUCH AS ONE-THIRD--BACK TO 1959 LEVELS.

"--WHEAT PRICES WOULD DROP TO ABOUT \$1.10 A BUSHEL--COMPARED WITH THE 1967 BLEND PRICE OF \$1.89, INCLUDING THE WHEAT CERTIFICATE.

"--CORN PRICES WOULD DROP TO ABOUT 75 CENTS A BUSHEL, COMPARED WITH A BLEND PRICE OF \$1.30 IN 1967.

"--COTTON WOULD SELL FOR 18 CENTS A POUND, COMPARED WITH 42 CENTS IN 1967 WITH PRICE SUPPORT PAYMENTS.

"--WITH LOWER GRAIN PRICES, LIVESTOCK SUPPLIES WOULD SOON OVER-BURDEN THE MARKET SO THAT LIVESTOCK PRICES WOULD DECLINE BY AT LEAST 10%."


LET ME SAY HERE AND NOW THAT I DON'T

THINK THERE HAS EVER BEEN A MORE BLATANT ATTEMPT TO MISLEAD THE CONGRESS OR THE PUBLIC THAN THE WORDS I JUST READ TO YOU FROM THE PRESIDENT'S FARM MESSAGE.

IN EACH INSTANCE, AS IT APPLIES TO COTTON, FEED GRAINS AND WHEAT, THERE ARE PERMANENT STATUTORY AUTHORITIES ON THE LAW BOOKS WHICH WOULD APPLY IF THE 1965 ACT SHOULD EXPIRE AT THE END OF THE 1969 PROGRAMS FOR THESE CROPS.

FOR WHEAT, FOR EXAMPLE, THE BASIC FARM LAWS OF 1938 AND 1949 PROVIDE FOR A MANDATORY WHEAT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM FOR THE 1970 CROPS. PRICE SUPPORTS ON DOMESTIC AND EXPORT COULD GO TO 90% OF PARITY. FARMERS WOULD, OF COURSE, HAVE TO APPROVE THIS MANDATORY PLAN IN A REFERENDUM.

FOR FEED GRAINS THESE SAME LAWS GIVE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DISCRETION TO SET SUPPORT PRICES FROM 50 TO 90 PER CENT OF PARITY.






ON COTTON, A MANDATORY PROGRAM WITH PRICE SUPPORTS AT 65 TO 90 PER CENT OF PARITY WOULD ALSO GO INTO EFFECT IF THE 1965 ACT SHOULD EXPIRE.

BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEES ARE GOING TO HOLD HEARINGS ON THE 1965 ACT. WHETHER THEY BRING AN EXTENSION TO THE FLOOR OR NOT, I THINK FARMERS, THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE CONGRESS SHOULD ALL REALIZE THAT A PREDICTION OF "CATASTROPHE AND RUIN" IN THE EVENT OF NO EXTENSION THIS YEAR IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN PURE PUFFING AND INCREDIBILITY.

PUBLIC LAW 480 WILL, OF COURSE, BE EXTENDED ONCE AGAIN. THIS PROGRAM HAS ENJOYED BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1954, DURING FORMER PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S ADMINISTRATION. IN EXTENDING THE ACT, HOWEVER, ALL OF US ARE GOING TO TRY TO RELATE IT ~~TO~~ OUR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEMS, TO MAKE IT



OPERATE AS A MORE POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON DOMESTIC FARM PRICES, AND TO EMPHASIZE EVEN MORE THE NEED FOR "SELF-HELP" BY UNDER-DEVELOPED NATIONS TEETERING ON THE BRINK OF A FOOD-POPULATION DISASTER.

GRAIN RESERVE LEGISLATION WILL NO DOUBT ALSO BE CONSIDERED BY THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES. I WOULD CERTAINLY HOPE THAT NEITHER THE HOUSE COMMITTEE NOR THE SENATE WOULD BRING FORTH A BILL LIKE LAST YEAR'S PROPOSAL OF THE ADMINISTRATION. ANY LEGISLATION WHICH GIVES THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE THE POWER TO DUMP GRAIN ON THE MARKET. WILL, IN MY OPINION, ONLY COMPOUND THE DIFFICULTY FACING FARMERS.

PERSONALLY, I FEEL THAT ALL GOVERNMENT GRAIN STOCKS SHOULD INSTEAD BE FULLY INSULATED FROM THE MARKET AT LEVELS WHICH WILL RAISE MARKET PRICES, NOT DEPRESS THEM.

FARM BARGAINING, I EXPECT, WILL BE



MOSTLY THE SUBJECT OF HEARINGS AND DISCUSSION THIS YEAR, ALTHOUGH THE "AGRICULTURAL FAIR PRACTICES ACT" -- S. 109 -- SHOULD BE CLEARED BY THE HOUSE THIS WEEK.

THE PRESIDENT'S PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS BILL HAS NOT BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE SINCE ITS REFERRAL TO CAPITOL HILL ~~LAST~~ LAST FALL, AND THE PRESIDENT'S RURAL RENEWAL PROPOSALS APPEAR TO BE PRETTY MUCH A RE-STATEMENT OF PREVIOUS LEGISLATION CONSIDERED BY THE CONGRESS.

AT THE PRESENT TIME, THEN, THE ONLY PART OF THE PRESIDENT'S PACKAGE THAT APPEARS HEADED TOWARD CERTAIN ENACTMENT THIS YEAR IS THE EXTENSION OF PUBLIC LAW 480.

THE HEARINGS ON THE 1965 ACT AND ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO CONGRESS CAN, IN MY OPINION, BE EXTREMELY USEFUL IF THEY ARE DIVORCED FROM PARTISAN POLITICS. I AM, UNFORTUNATELY, NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL TAKE AN OBJECTIVE




POSITION ON THESE MATTERS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE INCREDIBLE PROPHECY OF "CATASTROPHE AND RUIN" MADE IN THE FARM MESSAGE. THE AMERICAN FARMER NEEDS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGHER INCOME, NOT JUST MORE OF THE SAME.

ANY HEARINGS ON OUR MAJOR COMMODITIES SHOULD INCLUDE TESTIMONY FROM FARMERS UNION AS WELL AS THE OTHER GENERAL FARM AND COMMODITY ORGANIZATIONS. ACADEMIC, ECONOMIC AND LEGAL EXPERTS SHOULD ALSO BE CALLED.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS OF THE NATIONAL FOOD AND FIBRE COMMISSION SHOULD RECEIVE CAREFUL PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW. THIS REPORT SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO WITHER AND DIE FROM INDIFFERENCE AFTER SO MUCH TIME AND TALENT HAVE BEEN SPENT PREPARING IT.

THESE HEARINGS SHOULD, I FEEL, REALISTICALLY EXPLORE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESENT COMMODITY PROGRAMS. WHERE WEAKNESSES ARE FOUND, BETTER MEANS OF PROVIDING





INCOME PROTECTION TO FAMILY FARM AGRICULTURE MUST BE DEVISED.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE SHOULD ALLOCATE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO PROMOTE ADEQUATE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION, FUND THE REA AND RTA PROGRAMS AND AMPLE AGRICULTURAL CREDIT, AND CONTINUE OUR SOIL, WATER AND FORESTRY CONSERVATION AND SERVICE PROGRAMS.

A \$10 BILLION ANNUAL EXPORT MARKET SHOULD BE WITHIN OUR GRASPS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED WITH FAMILY FARMS RATHER THAN CORPORATE CONGLOMERATES AS THE KEYSTONE.

YES, AMERICAN AGRICULTURE IS VITALLY IMPORTANT, BOTH TO THE NATION AND TO THE PROMOTION OF PEACE IN THE WORLD.

THE MODERN FARM FAMILY, IN MY OPINION, IS MAKING A TREMENDOUS CONTRIBUTION TOWARD THE WELL-BEING OF ALL OUR CITIZENS.

AND YET THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY THAT

FARMERS ARE NO LONGER IMPORTANT IN OUR POLITICAL PROCESS. I NOTICED IN THE FARMERS UNION NEWSLETTER OF SEPTEMBER 22 OF LAST YEAR THAT MY COLLEAGUE, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE, WAS QUOTED AS FOLLOWS:

"POAGE TOLD AN IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY AUDIENCE THAT THE FARM BLOC IN CONGRESS NO LONGER EXISTS, THAT NEITHER POLITICAL PARTY IS DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH AGRICULTURE, AND THAT BOTH PARTIES FEEL THEY MUST DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO WIN BIG CITY VOTES."

LET ME TELL YOU AS ONE VOICE OF THE LOYAL OPPOSITION THAT MY FRIEND FROM TEXAS WAS PROBABLY HALF RIGHT WHEN HE SAID THAT! . . . .  
. . . OR, PUT ANOTHER WAY, I CAN AGREE WITH HIM 50% ON THAT ISSUE . . . . AS FAR AS HIS PARTY IS CONCERNED, BUT I CERTAINLY DO NOT ACCEPT THAT DESCRIPTION FOR MY PARTY.

I WON'T BELABOR YOU HERE WITH A POLITICAL PITCH -- YOU WILL BE EXPOSED TO PLENTY





OF THAT FROM VARIOUS QUARTERS DURING THE BALANCE OF THIS YEAR. I WILL ONLY POINT OUT THAT OUR HOUSE REPUBLICAN TASK FORCE ON AGRICULTURE, HEADED BY MY DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUE FROM MINNESOTA, ODIN LANGEN, RECENTLY SET FORTH THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FARM VOTE IN OUR NATIONAL ELECTIVE PROCESS.

AS A FARMER ONCE TOLD ME, "WE MAY BE OUT-NUMBERED, BUT WE SHOULDN'T BE OUTSMARTED."

THAT IS THE THOUGHT I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE WITH YOU TODAY AS WE CONSIDER THE FAMILY FARM IN THE SPACE AGE. LET'S ALL RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS KEY ELEMENT IN OUR SOCIETY. ITS IMPORTANCE IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC GAIN TO OUR SOCIETY IN GENERAL, ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND ITS CONTINUING IMPORTANCE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS ALL TRANSCEND MERE NUMBERS.

THE KEY ROLE OF FAMILY AGRICULTURE IN SPACE AGE AMERICA DEMANDS AND ASSURES THE

-17-

CONTINUED CONCENTRATION OF NATIONAL POLICY  
UPON ITS PROBLEMS. THIS HAS BEEN TRUE  
THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY. IT IS JUST AS TRUE  
TODAY. THANK YOU.

-END-



REMARKS OF CONGRESSMAN GERALD FORD (R-Mich)  
Republican Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
AT NATIONAL FARMERS UNION CONVENTION  
Minneapolis, Minnesota - March 18, 1968

THE FARM FAMILY IN THE SPACE AGE

Let me say at the outset that I am indeed very pleased to have been invited to participate at this important convention.

Through my years of Congressional service, I have always held your fine organization in great respect, and though we may have differed from time to time, I have always felt the Farmers Union has sincerely and effectively worked for the betterment of family farming in our great nation.

Some skeptics have asked in recent years, "Just what good is the family farm anyhow? Isn't it as old fashioned and as out of date in this modern age of science and technology as the horse and buggy?"

Well, you know and I know that the family farm is the social and economic backbone of an agricultural establishment that is the envy of the world. I need not cite to you all the figures on the contribution that modern family farms are making to the high standard of living that America enjoys. But a few reminders might be in order.

The American consumer today is harvesting the reward of our ever-increasingly efficient agricultural production and marketing system. A recent report issued by the Department of Agriculture showed that if it were not for the sharp gains in farm efficiency during the past two decades every American would be paying more for his food and enjoying it less.

While the output per man-hour in manufacturing has increased 2.7 per cent per year since 1948, the output in agriculture has increased by 5 per cent per year.

In 1948 the number of man hours used for all farm work totaled 16.5 billion. In 1966, this figure had dropped to 7 billion man hours.

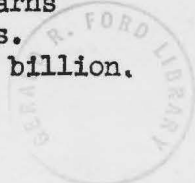
Farm production increased nearly 40 per cent during the same period.

Or, stated another way, in 1948 one farm worker supplied about 14 others with food and fibre. Today he supplies 42 others.

During the same time, the number of consumers has increased by 40 per cent, while the number of workers employed in the food industry increased by about 12 per cent.

Let us stop right here and ask "Who provided this miraculous economic growth?" The answer, of course, is family-sized agricultural units.

Yet, as you know, the family farmer in this country has not shared in the economic rewards that should be his for these tremendous contributions. Frankly, I know of no great economic group of citizens in our society which today earns less money than it did 20 years ago . . . no group, that is, except farmers. In 1947, realized net farm income was \$17.0 billion. In 1967 it was \$14.5 billion.



In this past year of 1967, we have seen realized net farm income fall \$1.9 billion below the previous year. Can you imagine any other group in our society taking a \$1.9 billion pay cut?

In my home state of Michigan, the drop was 9 per cent. Here in Minnesota, it was 11 per cent. Net income per farm also dropped in spite of a decline of approximately 100,000 in the number of farms.

At the same time, the parity ration . . . that measuring rod of relative prosperity in agriculture . . . dropped to 74.

In 1967, agricultural exports which are so important to the balance of trade situation were down 7 per cent below the previous year.

The dairy import-export picture became particularly disturbing last year. In 1967 there were 2.9 billion pounds of milk equivalent imported, while only 364 million pounds were exported. This is most disturbing in view of the fact that just four years ago (in 1964) our dairy imports were only 830 million pounds of milk equivalent and our exports were a whopping 6.9 billion pounds.

These figures show quite dramatically and quite painfully how the American dairy farmer has been caught in a vicious scissor of rising import competition and declining export opportunity.

There are, of course, other alarming and worrisome statistics that show our farmers are in financial trouble. But I know I need not repeat the obvious, so let me say only that I for one certainly realize the difficulty.

Of course, recognizing the existence of a problem and doing something about it are two different things.

As one of my lady colleagues in the House once said at a Rules Committee hearing after the members of that committee had bestowed a series of flowery accolades upon her: "Ah, Gentlemen, first the novocaine, then the needle."

I think that we can all agree that the average family farm operator in this country is not in the soundest financial condition. What then can we do?

Let's look at the political realities in Washington. A party other than the one to which I belong now controls both houses of the Congress, as well as that large white building on Pennsylvania Avenue where all the important decisions of day-to-day government are made. That being true, we must first analyze the proposals made by the President in his recent farm message.

As you recall, he asked for the permanent extension of the Agricultural Act of 1965. He also called for a three-year extension of Public Law 480, the Food for Peace Program. He sought a "Food Bank" in which grain farmers would be the sole depositors. He asked for hearings to be held on farm bargaining. He called for the enactment of new Packers and Stockyards Act legislation and finally, he made some generalized comments about rural renewal.

Let me offer a few comments about each of these recommendations.

In urging the extension of the 1965 Act this year, the President said, and I quote:



"To terminate the 1965 Act would bring catastrophe and ruin to many farmers.

"Cash prices to the farmer would fall -- and there would be no government payments to cushion the impact. Farm income could drop by as much as one-third -- back to 1959 levels.

"--Wheat prices drop to about \$1.10 a bushel -- compared with the 1967 blend price of \$1.89, including the wheat certificate.

"--Corn prices would drop to about 75 cents a bushel, compared with a blend price of \$1.30 in 1967.

"--Cotton would sell for 18 cents a pound, compared with 42 cents in 1967 with price support payments.

"--With lower grain prices, livestock supplies would soon over-burden the market so that livestock prices would decline by at least 10 per cent."

Let me say here and now that I don't think there has ever been a more blatant attempt to mislead the Congress or the public than the words I just read to you from the President's farm message.

In each instance, as it applies to cotton, feed grains and wheat, there are permanent statutory authorities on the law books which would apply if the 1965 Act should expire at the end of the 1969 programs for these crops.

For wheat, for example, the basic farm laws of 1938 and 1949 provide for a mandatory wheat certificate program for the 1970 crops. Price supports on domestic and export wheat could go to 90 per cent of parity. Farmers would, of course, have to approve this mandatory plan in a referendum.

For feed grains these same laws give the Secretary of Agriculture discretion to set support prices from 50 to 90 per cent of parity.

On cotton, a mandatory program with price supports at 65 to 90 percent of parity would also go into effect if the 1965 Act should expire.

Both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees are going to hold hearings on the 1965 Act. Whether they bring an extension to the floor or not, I think farmers, the general public and the Congress should all realize that a prediction of "catastrophe and ruin" in the event of no extension this year is somewhere between pure puffing and incredibility.

Public law 480 will, of course, be extended once again. This program has enjoyed bi-partisan support since its inception in 1954 during former President Eisenhower's Administration. In extending the Act, however, all of us are going to try to relate it to our balance of payments problems, to make it operate as a more positive influence on domestic farm prices, and to emphasize even more the need for "self-help" by under-developed nations teetering on the brink of a food-population disaster.

Grain reserve legislation will no doubt also be considered by the appropriate committees. I would certainly hope that neither the House Committee nor the Senate would bring forth a bill like last year's proposal of the Administration.



Any legislation which gives the Secretary of Agriculture the power to dump grain on the market will, in my opinion, only compound the difficulty facing farmers.

Personally, I feel that all government grain stocks should instead be fully insulated from the market at levels which will raise market prices, not depress them.

Farm bargaining, I expect, will be mostly the subject of hearings and discussion this year, although the "Agricultural Fair Practices Act" -- S.109 -- should be cleared by the House this week.

The President's Packers and Stockyards bill has not been introduced in the House since its referral to Capitol Hill last Fall, and the President's rural renewal proposals appear to be pretty much of a re-statement of previous legislation considered by the Congress.

At the present time, then, the only part of the President's package that appears headed toward certain enactment this year is the extension of Public Law 480.

The hearings on the 1965 Act and alternatives available to Congress can, in my opinion, be extremely useful if they are divorced from partisan politics. I am, unfortunately, not optimistic that the Administration will take an objective position on these matters, particularly in view of the incredible prophecy of "catastrophe and ruin" made in the farm message. The American farmer needs the opportunity for higher income, not just more of the same.

Any hearings on our major commodities should include testimony from Farmers Union as well as the other general farm and commodity organizations. Academic, economic and legal experts should also be called.

The recommendations and findings of the National Food and Fiber Commission should receive careful public and Congressional review. This report should not be permitted to wither and die from indifference after so much time and talent have been spent preparing it.

These hearings should, I feel, realistically explore the effectiveness of the present commodity programs. Where weaknesses are found, better means of providing income protection to family farm agriculture must be devised.

At the same time, we should allocate sufficient resources to promote adequate agricultural research and education, fund the REA and RTA programs and ample agricultural credit, and continue our soil, water and forestry conservation and service programs.

A \$10 billion annual export market should be within our grasps in the near future.

Rural development should be emphasized with family farms rather than corporate conglomerates as the keystone.

Yes, American agriculture is vitally important, both to the nation and to the promotion of peace in the world.



The modern farm family, in my opinion, is making a tremendous contribution toward the well-being of all our citizens.

And yet there are those who say that farmers are no longer important in our political process. I noticed in the Farmers Union Newsletter of September 22 of last year that my colleague, the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, was quoted as follows:

"Poage told an Iowa State University audience that the farm bloc in Congress no longer exists, that neither political party is deeply concerned with agriculture, and that both parties feel they must do whatever is necessary to win big city votes."

Let me tell you as once voice of the loyal opposition that my friend from Texas was probably half right when he said that . . . . or, put another way, I can agree with him 50 per cent on that issue . . . . as far as his party is concerned, but I certainly do not accept that description for my party.

I won't belabor you here with a political pitch -- you will be exposed to plenty of that from various quarters during the balance of this year. I will only point out that our House Republican Task Force on Agriculture, headed by my distinguished colleague from Minnesota, Odin Langen, recently set forth the importance of the farm vote in our national elective process.

As a farmer once told me . . . "We may be outnumbered, but we shouldn't be outsmarted."

That is the thought I would like to leave with you today as we consider the family farm in the space age. Let's all recognize the importance of this key element in our society. Its importance in terms of economic gain to our society in general, its contribution to social responsibility, and its continuing importance in the political process all transcend mere numbers.

The key role of family agriculture in space age America demands and assures the continued concentration of national policy upon its problems. This has been true throughout our history -- it is just as true today.

Thank you.

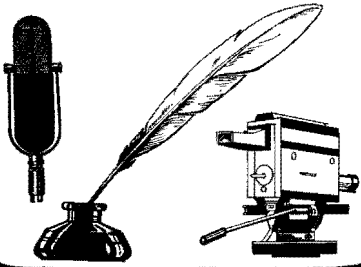
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CONGRESSMAN  
**GERALD R. FORD**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS  
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 p.m. CST (7:30 p.m. EST)--  
Monday, March 18, 1968

An Address by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., at the National Farmers Union Convention, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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The American consumer today is harvesting the reward of our ever-increasingly efficient agricultural production and marketing system. A recent report issued by the Department of Agriculture showed that if it were not for the sharp gains in farm efficiency during the past two decades every American would be paying more for his food and enjoying it less.

While the output per man-hour in manufacturing has increased 2.7% per year since 1948, the output in agriculture has increased by 5% per year.

In 1948, the number of man hours used for all farm work totaled 16.5 billion. In 1966, this figure had dropped to 7 billion man hours.

Farm production increased nearly 40 per cent during the same period.

Or, stated another way, in 1948 one farm worker supplied about 14 others with food and fibre. Today he supplies 42 others.

During the same time, the number of consumers has increased by 40 per cent, while the number of workers employed in the food industry increased by about 12 per cent.

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In this past year of 1967, we have seen realized net farm income fall \$1.9 billion below the previous year. Can you imagine any other group in our society taking a \$1.9 billion pay cut?

In my home state of Michigan, the drop was 9%. Here in Minnesota, it was 11%. Net income per farm also dropped in spite of a decline of approximately 100,000 in the number of farms.

At the same time, the parity ratio, . . . that measuring rod of relative prosperity in agriculture . . . dropped to 74. This is the lowest annual level for the parity ratio since 1933.

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These figures show quite dramatically and quite painfully how the American dairy farmer has been caught in a vicious scissor of rising import competition and declining export opportunity.

There are, of course, other alarming and worrisome statistics that show our farmers are in financial trouble. But I know I need not repeat the obvious, so let me say only that I for one certainly realize the difficulty.

Of course, recognizing the existence of a problem and doing something about it are two different things.

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Let me offer a few comments about each of these recommendations.

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"To terminate the 1965 Act would bring catastrophe and ruin to many farmers.

"Cash prices to the farmer would fall--and there would be no government payments to cushion the impact. Farm income could drop by as much as one-third--back to 1959 levels.

"--Wheat prices would drop to about \$1.10 a bushel--compared with the 1967 blend price of \$1.89, including the wheat certificate.

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In each instance, as it applies to cotton, feed grains and wheat, there are permanent statutory authorities on the law books which would apply if the 1965 Act should expire at the end of the 1969 programs for these crops.

For wheat, for example, the basic farm laws of 1938 and 1949 provide for a mandatory wheat certificate program for the 1970 crops. Price supports on domestic and export wheat could go to 90% of parity. Farmers would, of course, have to approve this mandatory plan in a referendum.

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Public Law 480 will, of course, be extended once again. This program has enjoyed bi-partisan support since its inception in 1954, during former President Eisenhower's administration. In extending the Act, however, all of us are going to try to relate it to our balance of payments problems, to make it operate as a more positive influence on domestic farm prices, and to emphasize even more the need for "self-help" by under-developed nations teetering on the brink of a food-population disaster.

Grain Reserve legislation will no doubt also be considered by the appropriate committees. I would certainly hope that neither the House Committee nor the Senate would bring forth a bill like last year's proposal of the Administration. Any legislation which gives the Secretary of Agriculture the power to dump grain on the market will, in my opinion, only compound the difficulty facing farmers.

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Yes, American agriculture is vitally important, both to the nation and to the promotion of peace in the world.

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And yet there are those who say that farmers are no longer important in our political process. I noticed in the Farmers Union Newsletter of September 22 of last year that my colleague, the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, was quoted as follows:

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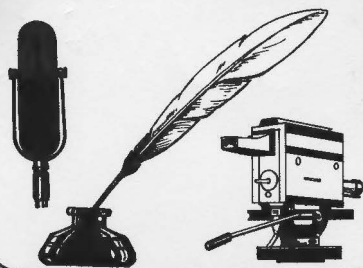
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The key role of family agriculture in space age America demands and assures the continued concentration of national policy upon its problems. This has been true throughout our history. It is just as true today. Thank you.

# # #

*Distribution: 20 copies to Mr. Ford*

*M Office Copy*



CONGRESSMAN  
**GERALD R. FORD**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS  
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 p.m. CST (7:30 p.m. EST)--  
Monday, March 18, 1968

An Address by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., at the National Farmers Union Convention, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"THE FAMILY FARM IN THE SPACE AGE"

Let me say at the outset that I am indeed very pleased to have been invited to participate at this important convention.

Through my years of Congressional service, I have always held your fine organization in great respect, and though we may have differed from time to time, I have always felt the Farmers Union has sincerely and effectively worked for the betterment of family farming in our great nation.

Some skeptics have asked in recent years, "Just what good is the family farm anyhow? Isn't it as old fashioned and as out of date in this modern age of science and technology as the horse and buggy?"

Well, you know and I know that the family farm is the social and economic backbone of an agricultural establishment that is the envy of the world. I need not cite to you all the figures on the contribution that modern family farms are making to the high standard of living that America enjoys. But a few reminders might be in order.

The American consumer today is harvesting the reward of our ever-increasingly efficient agricultural production and marketing system. A recent report issued by the Department of Agriculture showed that if it were not for the sharp gains in farm efficiency during the past two decades every American would be paying more for his food and enjoying it less.

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# # #



March 18, 1968

I'm told President Johnson made one of his surprise public appearances outside a military base to address you this morning.

According to the news reports we got in Washington, the President appealed to you to join in "a program of national austerity." That should be easy -- American farmers have been on an austerity program ever since the Johnson Administration took over.

I also saw some pickets as I came in carrying signs saying "Impeach LBJ."

I'm not here to advocate that -- we have an orderly American method of changing Presidents every four years -- and this is one of those years!

And, of course, I'm not here to boost the political fortunes of any other Democrat. I believe in the two-party system, and despite the preponderance of Democratic news this past weekend, the name of the other national party is still the Republican Party.

Seriously, I think it took courage for the President to come into McCarthy country escorted only by his Vice President.

As I left Washington, I heard a bunch of teenagers chanting:

"Bobby Shaft-O's on TV

"Lyndon's Coonskin on his knee

"He'll come back to be V.P.

"Pretty Bobby Shaft-O."





I'm not going to get into the middle of a family fight among Democrats. A guy can get hurt doing that.

I've spent all this morning and afternnon at the regular Spring meeting of the National Republican Coordinating Committee. And I can tell you one thing about this meeting behind closed doors. We were -- every one of us -- deeply and primarily concerned,, not with partisan political advantage in this crucial election year, but with how we can best help this nation survive its difficulties between now and November.

And when President Johnson told you he didn't want the Communist enemy in Hanoi to win something in Washington that he hasn't been able to win on the battlefield in Vietnam, I say to you the Communist enemy will never get any such notion from our Republican leadership.

If the President really means what he says about everybody tightening their belts in America -- everybody, NOT just the farmers -- he will have strong Republican support in the Congress.



March 10, 1968

Office of the White House Press Secretary  
(Minneapolis, Minnesota)

- - - - -

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF THE REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION CONVENTION  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

I'm happy to be here.

I don't believe anyone can claim that I am a new recruit to the farmer's course.

You and I wear many of the same campaign ribbons. Some of them represent victories--and some defeats. Mine go back to the thirties. Yours go back 66 years--during which the Farmers Union has led the way in rural America. You have produced great leaders--like Jim Patton and Tony Dechant, and your fine state presidents. Much of the legislation that has helped the American farmer to a better day bears the Farmers Union brand.

I know what the farmer wants - and I want you to have it.

- You want a fair price for your product--and you will have it.
- You want assurance that rising costs will not wipe out a lifetime investment--and you will have it.
- You want parity--a fair deal, an even chance to share in the rich and good life of this good nation--and you will have it.
- You want the justice, the decency and the opportunity that every American has the right to claim as his native right.
- And you will have them.

So long as I am your President you will always have my understanding, my admiration and my wholehearted support in fighting for these goals.

We know that it will be a fight. We know there are many who oppose our goals.

MORE

There are those who have forgotten that without farms, there would be no factories, no cities.

There are those who no longer believe in the partnership between farmer and government--who tell us its time to "get the government out of agriculture."

There are those who fail to realize that many of the problems of urban America are a reflection of failures in rural America.

You know, as I do, that the farmer's problems are the problems of all America. And you know that the solution to those problems will require the sympathy and the understanding and the help of each of us.

So I did my spring planting a little early this year. Three weeks ago, I sent Congress a message on the farmer and rural America.

That message will sound mighty familiar to the Farmers Union--because you have designed much of it--and supported all of it.

I have asked Congress to extend the Supply Management Programs of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 - this year - with permanent authority because the farmer shouldn't be asked to grow more than the market can take at a fair price.

I have asked Congress to continue the direct payment programs of the 1965 Act--they are the difference between profit and loss for many farmers each year.

I have asked Congress to extend the Food for Freedom Act for an additional three years--because it is right for this nation to help hungry peoples from our abundance - and because it is good business for our farmers to build new markets in other lands.

I have asked Congress to authorize a national food bank--a security reserve of wheat, feedgrains and soybeans--which would give the farmer higher prices, protect the consumer from food scarcity, and provide the government with an emergency food "cushion" in reaching supply-management decisions.

I have asked Congress to help find the ways to give the farmer more bargaining power in the marketplace. As you have so many times before, the Farmers Union is leading the way in this fight.

Finally, I have asked Congress for programs to bring parity of opportunity to rural America - more farm credit - rural jobs - decent housing - adequate diets - the chance to lead a full and productive life.

MORE

During the months to come, you will hear these programs cussed and discussed. It won't be easier to pass them. It will be even harder this session because this is - as I remember - an election year.

Some voices today express doubt that the American farm and the American farmer can survive. They say we must sacrifice that priceless heritage--that American dream on the altar of progress.

I say they are just as wrong as they can be.

If the farmers of America speak up courageously and forcefully in their own behalf--if we and you together have the patience and determination to preserve and improve our agricultural programs--if we trust our hopes and not our fears, American agriculture can prosper as never before.

And rural America can continue to stand for that which is best in all America.

There is another area in which all Americans - farmers and city dwellers must demonstrate - that same courage, patience and determination.

For many years we have been engaged in a struggle in Southeast Asia to stop the onrushing tide of Communist aggression. This tide threatens to engulf that part of the world. It threatens our own security and that of our allies.

The blood of our young men has been shed in this cause. They know why we are there. They have seen the evidence of the enemy's determination to conquer those who seek to be masters in their own house.

Our fighting men know, from the evidence in their eyes, that we face a ruthless enemy. They know from the carnage of the enemy's treacherous assaults that he has no feelings about the deliberate murder of innocent women and children in the villages and cities of South Vietnam.

They are not misled by propaganda or by the effort to gloss over the actions of an enemy who has broken every truce, and who makes no secret of his intention to conquer by force the people of South Vietnam.

At the same time, during these past four years we have made remarkable strides here at home. We have opened the doors of freedom and full citizenship and opportunity to 30 million people,

MORE

and we have sustained the highest level of prosperity for the longest period of time ever known.

But the time has come when your President must ask you to join in a total national effort to win the war, to win the peace, and to complete the job at home.

I ask you to join in a program of national austerity to insure that our economy will prosper and our fiscal position will be sound.

The Congress has been asked to enact a bill which will impose upon the average citizen an additional one cent for each dollar of taxes. I ask you to bear this burden in the interest of a stronger nation.

I am consulting with the Congress on proposals for savings in the national budget. If it is the will of the Congress, we shall make such reductions. They will postpone many needed actions.

All travel outside the Western Hemisphere by government officials and private citizens which is not absolutely essential should be postponed. I have already called for savings and cuts in expenditures and investments abroad by our business enterprises. We are going to intensify this program.

Most of all I ask your help and your patriotic support for our men who are bearing the burden of battle in Vietnam. We seek not the victory of conquest, but the triumph of justice. We will win.

I am deeply aware of the yearning in our country for peace. We are a peace loving nation. There is none among you who desires peace more than your President. We hope to achieve a just peace at the negotiating table. But if the enemy continues to insist--as it does now--that the outcome must be determined on the battlefield, then we will win the peace on the battlefield.

To reach that peace will require your sacrifice, your understanding, your help, and your cooperation.

# # #



Remarks  
Vice President Hubert Humphrey  
National Farmers Union  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
March 13, 1968

"The farm was here before the factory . . .

"America was built on a foundation of farms and ranches supplying the food and fiber for a bountiful and restless nation.

"It was the farmer's qualities--his hard work and perseverance, his independence and initiative--which gave strength to a nation's character.

"Agriculture, our first industry, remains our greatest. It is the vital center of our economy--fueling our industry and commerce, feeding our people and the hungry of the world . . .

"But the American farmer, who helped to build America's prosperity, still does not fully--or fairly--share in it."

Those are not the words of Tony Dechant--though they might well be.

Those are words from President Johnson's new message to the Congress on agriculture.

And the unfair, unjust paradox of inadequate incomes for the very industry and the very people who provide the keystone of American prosperity is what that message is designed to correct.

Inadequate farm income means more than an unfair break for the farmer.

It means the entire rural economy held back.

It means transferring poverty from a rural setting to an urban slum--a cruel gamble and a disservice to all.

It means infringement of a fundamental American freedom--freedom to choose where to live and where to work--for millions of young Americans who can see no future on the farms and homesteads they love.

Now you and I have been getting together off and on over the last few years to read the health chart on American agriculture.

The chart didn't look too good back in the 'Fifties--higher and higher outlays by the taxpayer for farm programs, and less and less income for the farmer.

The chart has turned up in the 'Sixties . . . net farm income up 55 percent today . . . exports at an all-time high of 6.8 billion dollars in 1967 . . . inventories below a billion dollars for the first time since 1953.

But you know and I know that the patient is still a long way from perfect health.

And all of us who have struggled with the complexities of farm legislation over the years know that there aren't any miracle remedies on the shelf.

There is, however, in this year's farm message, the most comprehensive, reasoned, clear and bold farm program ever set down by any American president.

It is your program. Your leaders had a great deal to do with what it says, and you've been for everything that's in it.

The Johnson-Humphrey Administration says to the American farmer: We don't presume to take care of you. But we do mean to work closely with you as partners to see that you can fully and fairly take care of yourselves in the marketplace . . . at home and abroad . . . now and for years and decades to come.

Let's take a closer look at that message.

Point one calls for a permanent extension of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965.

As long as the farms of America produce more than we can consume, we are going to need machinery to balance supply and demand--to avoid the income-depressing, farm-killing cycle of glut and scarcity.

This year the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 faced its severest test. Increased wheat and feed grain allotments for 1967 crops were followed by a series of unforeseen events: World-wide bumper crops, smaller total demand--and lower prices for the farmer.

But I submit to you that the 1965 Act passed the test this year. Its direct payments provided the margin between profit and loss for a great many farmers--an additional 48 cents for each bushel of wheat--15 cents for each pound of cotton--20 cents for each bushel of corn.

You know what the alternative would have been without the Act--lower cash prices and no government payments to cushion the impact. Indeed the specialists tell us that farm income could have dropped as much as a third--back to 1959 levels . . . wheat at a dollar and ten cents a bushel . . . corn at 75 cents.

The President explicitly recognizes that the present act can be improved, and we mean to work closely with you to improve it.

But let's extend it permanently now, so that the farmer, like any other businessman, can do his planning in advance and never be the innocent victim of a program lapse.

Point two: A three-year extension of the Food for Freedom Act.

Last year you and your fellow American farmers kept literally millions of people in developing countries around the world from starvation. You improved the diets of millions more.

In a world that knows too much of hate and selfishness, our food aid programs have stood out year after year as a humanitarian beacon of hope. That in itself is ample justification for the Food for Freedom program.

But there is more than the humanitarian justification. Food aid has meant economic development which in turn has created new markets for American agricultural products. Japan, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain and many countries which have received assistance under U. S. food aid programs are now among our best dollar customers for farm exports.

Food aid is more than good-neighborliness. It is good business.

And, in a hungry world, strong, productive, independent American family farms amount to no less than a massive defense system in the cause of peace. No other nation can equal it.

Food power--and the food aid programs which you and I have fought so hard for over the years--are America's exclusive tool for building a safer, freer world.

This nation should pay its producers a fair price for that food power--and use it to the full.

Point three of the President's message is creation of a national food bank for wheat, feed grains, and soybeans.

The food bank would serve multiple purposes--protecting the consumer against food scarcity . . . protecting the farmer against falling prices . . . and further cushioning the ups and downs that are part of any commodity program.

This program has three critical ingredients:

--A reserve owned by farmers under strengthened resale provisions in the price support program. The Johnson-Humphrey Administration has always believed that farmers should be able to retain their equity as long as possible, and that the inventory in the hands of the Commodity Credit Corporation should be reduced to a safe minimum. That is why we recently extended the resale privilege to warehouses:

--Authority for the Secretary of Agriculture to buy additional reserves at market prices--without waiting until prices drop to support levels;

--Insulation of the food bank from the commercial market.

We introduced legislation for a food bank of this kind in the Congress last year. Now let's pass it.

Now point four is perhaps the most important, and all the other programs are calculated to support it: Increased bargaining power for the farmer in the American marketplace.

As Tony Dechant reminded the National Farm Institute last month: "The farmer is the only businessman left in America who is still forced to sell his products at wholesale prices set by somebody else . . . and to buy his production supplies at retail prices, also set by someone else.

Real and effective bargaining power for the American farmer is long overdue--especially in livestock, poultry, fruits and vegetables which are not covered by price support and payment programs.

I am happy to say that a great young senator, Walter Mondale, has introduced a bill in the Senate along the lines of the National Agricultural Act that Tony Dechant and Bill Thatcher have been urging for so long.

We still don't know all the "how's" of effective farm bargaining. But we know it is possible . . . it is necessary . . . and the Johnson-Humphrey Administration is for it.

The Farmers Union has a long-standing record of building farm cooperatives. Cooperatives have already increased the

farmer's voice in the marketplace, and will be a crucial element in future bargaining strength.

But let me also re-emphasize that partnership between the farmers and government is essential to bargaining power.

When you have the machinery to maintain a reasonable supply-demand balance--and only then--farm bargaining power increases.

When you allow farmers to resell their grain, farm bargaining power increases.

When you improve nutrition for children under School Milk, School Lunch, Food Stamp and domestic donation programs, farm bargaining power increases.

When you reduce unemployment, help people lift themselves out of poverty, and enable more Americans to afford a decent diet, and this Administration has done those things, farm bargaining power increases.

When you negotiate an international commodity agreement, as Tony Dechant and others helped us do last summer in the Kennedy Round trade negotiations in Geneva, farm bargaining power increases.

And it is bargaining power that can put the American farmer firmly on his own two feet in the American marketplace.

Finally, there are proposals to improve the general quality of life in rural America for all who live there and all who wish they could.

"Operation Outreach," begun last year, will continue to bring 90 federal programs designed to improve everything from health to housing . . . from education to economic development . . . right into the countryside.

Parity for the American farmer will mean little without parity for his community . . . parity in everything that belongs to a modern American standard of living for every rural citizen: Meaningful job opportunities . . . decent housing . . . adequate diets . . . the chance to lead a full and productive life.

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My fellow Minnesotans know very well that I am reluctant to talk politics--especially when there is an election only a few months away.

But you are practical people--and passing farm programs is a very practical business.



Farm bargaining power is going to be tested on election day in November.

On election day you are going to negotiate a four-year contract--and it won't be subject to renegotiation.

On election day you are going into the marketplace of political decision to decide what happens to American agriculture--and to all those programs the Farmers Union has fought for long and hard.

Today we have a president whose record is clear and unequivocal.

We have a President who has fought as a senator and in the White House for American agriculture . . . for fair prices with a decent profit for the farmer . . . for protection from the speculator and the unpredictable forces of the market . . . for the health and welfare of rural America.

He believes in parity for American agriculture . . . in full and equal opportunity for every farm family and agricultural producer.

I doubt if you've forgotten the effects of the Republican neglect a few years ago.

Farm income dropped a full 20 percent in eight years--down two and a quarter billion dollars. By 1960 the Commodity Credit Corporation held eight billion dollars worth of stock.

I know what that meant here in Minnesota and throughout the country--and I don't think this nation or its food producers can afford to go through it again.

Yes, American agriculture has a good friend in President Lyndon Johnson.

But it takes more than a strong, determined, friend-of-the-farmer in the White House to enact sound farm legislation.

Much of what I have discussed today has to get through the Congress before it can do America's farm economy any good.

And there is nothing automatic about Congress adopting farm programs any more--particularly when senators and representatives from rural districts vote against them. We can no longer depend on a strong bipartisan farm bloc like the one we had until the 1950s.

Keep this in mind when you look over your congressional candidates in the months ahead.

Find out where they and their supporters stand on farm prices . . . and farm programs . . . and farm bargaining.

Take a look, also, at the list of sponsors of the Curtis bill--a proposal to eliminate all farm programs.

It also includes the names of some of the Republicans who voted 110 to 14 to kill the 1965 Farm Act. Democrats, farm and city alike, provided the margin to get that bill through.

As Sam Rayburn used to say, "Any donkey can kick a barn down, but it takes a good carpenter to build one."

So I urge you to ask some pointed questions before you step into the polls. There is a lot of unfinished business ahead of us in American agriculture and it is going to take builders, not barn wreckers, to finish it.

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