

The original documents are located in Box 29, “4/22/76 - Opening Statement at a Public Forum in Hinkle Fieldhouse, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

OPENING STATEMENT TO PUBLIC FORUM

AT BUTLER UNIVERSITY, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HOUSE
HINKLE FIELD[^]- BUTLER UNIVERSITY

- THANK YOU, GOVERNOR BOWEN.

- CONGRESSMAN BUD HILLIS
- CONGRESSMAN JOHN MYERS
- MAYOR BILL HUDNUT

- PRESIDENT JONES (Alex Jones is Butler University President)

- JACK GUEST (President, Student Body)

- STUDENTS, FACULTY AND GUESTS OF BUTLER UNIVERSITY

high
IT IS AN HONOR AND A GREAT PRIVILEGE

FOR ME TO TAKE PART IN THE BUTLER UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSEMBLY
LECTURE SERIES THIS EVENING.

I ADMIRE BUTLER UNIVERSITY FOR MANY THINGS,
BUT I MUST SAY THAT ONE OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IS
PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE. THAT IS THE ABILITY OF THIS
UNIVERSITY TO BALANCE ITS BUDGET IN EACH OF THE LAST 20 YEARS.

I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY TIMES PRESIDENT JONES
HAS HAD TO USE HIS VETO TO KEEP THE BUDGET IN BALANCE,
BUT WHATEVER HE'S DOING, IT SURE SEEMS TO WORK.

AS SOME OF YOU KNOW, I HAVE VETOED A FEW BILLS
IN MY TIME, TOO -- 48 AT LAST COUNT. AND 39 OF THOSE
VETOES HAVE BEEN SUSTAINED BY THE CONGRESS, SAVING THE
AMERICAN TAXPAYER THIRTEEN BILLION DOLLARS.

BUT I WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL WE MATCH YOUR
RECORD AND BALANCE THE FEDERAL BUDGET. WITH YOUR
SUPPORT AND A LITTLE HELP FROM THE CONGRESS, I FULLY INTEND
TO BALANCE THAT BUDGET WITHIN THREE YEARS AND GIVE THE
TAXPAYER ANOTHER MAJOR TAX CUT.

I CAN ALSO REPORT TO YOU THAT THE WORST

ECONOMIC RECESSION AMERICA HAS SUFFERED IN 40 YEARS

HAS BEEN REPLACED BY A STRONG AND STABLE RECOVERY.

in our economy

TODAY EVERYTHING THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE GOING UP

IS GOING UP AND EVERYTHING THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE GOING DOWN

IS GOING DOWN.

TODAY MORE AMERICANS ARE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

THAN EVER BEFORE IN THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY.

EIGHTY-SIX MILLION, SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND AMERICANS

WERE WORKING IN MARCH 1976 -- AND THAT IS OVER

TWO AND A HALF MILLION MORE THAN WERE ON THE JOB A YEAR AGO.

AT THE SAME TIME, UNEMPLOYMENT IS COMING DOWN --

FROM A HIGH OF NEARLY NINE PERCENT LAST MAY TO

SEVEN AND A HALF PERCENT TODAY. THAT'S STILL NOT GOOD

ENOUGH, BUT THAT'S REAL PROGRESS.

REAL EARNINGS FOR THE AMERICAN WORKERS ARE UP

DRAMATICALLY OVER WHAT THEY WERE A YEAR AGO.

TOTAL RETAIL SALES ARE UP MORE THAN 17 PERCENT FROM LAST YEAR,

AUTO SALES ARE UP 43 PERCENT, FURNITURE AND APPLIANCE SALES

ARE UP MORE THAN 17 PERCENT, FOOD SALES ARE UP MORE THAN

NINE PERCENT, AND GENERAL MERCHANDISE SALES ARE UP 13 PERCENT.

THE INDEX OF CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IS DOUBLE

WHAT IT WAS A YEAR AGO. THE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

ANNOUNCED EARLIER THIS WEEK THAT THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT

ROSE AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF SEVEN AND A HALF PERCENT IN THE

FIRST QUARTER OF 1976.

THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, RELEASED JUST YESTERDAY,
SHOWED THAT THE ANNUAL RATE OF INFLATION IN THE FIRST THREE
MONTHS OF THIS YEAR WAS ONLY 2.9 PERCENT,
THE LOWEST QUARTERLY INFLATION RATE SINCE THE SUMMER OF 1972.

IT'S EASY TO GET LOST IN A SEA OF STATISTICS

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE ECONOMY, BUT ALL OF THESE STATISTICS

POINT TO ONE SIMPLE, UNDENIABLE FACT: WE'RE ON THE ROAD

TO A NEW PROSPERITY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

AND WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO BE SIDETRACKED NOW.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS FOR OUR

ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN RECENT MONTHS HAS BEEN THE CONTRIBUTION

OF WHAT EARL BUTZ CALLS THE "MIRACLE MAN OF THE 20th CENTURY" --

THE AMERICAN FARMER.

IN FACT, THE LAST THREE YEARS HAVE BEEN THE

HIGHEST NET FARM INCOME YEARS IN HISTORY, AND THAT IS

A TREMENDOUS RECORD.

I DON'T THINK IT IS A MERE COINCIDENCE

THAT THESE THREE VERY SUCCESSFUL YEARS HAVE BEEN YEARS

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT LEFT THE FARMER ALONE AND LET HIM PRODUCE

WITHOUT A LOT OF BUREAUCRATIC INTERFERENCE FROM THE

NATION'S CAPITAL.

I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT IS THE KIND OF SUCCESSFUL

FARM POLICY THAT I INTEND TO PURSUE FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

I PROPOSE THAT WE CONTINUE THE FARM POLICIES

WHICH YIELDED A 21.6 BILLION DOLLAR AGRICULTURAL EXPORT MARKET

LAST YEAR, AND WILL BE ABOUT 22 BILLION DOLLARS THIS YEAR.

I PROPOSE THAT WE CONTINUE POLICIES WHICH WILL

ENABLE THE AMERICAN FARMER TO EXPORT AN ESTIMATED

47 MILLION METRIC TONS OF FEED GRAIN -- AN ALL-TIME RECORD --

IN THE CURRENT MARKETING YEAR.

I ALSO URGE THE CONGRESS TO ENACT MY PROPOSAL

TO INCREASE THE ESTATE-TAX EXEMPTION FROM 60 THOUSAND DOLLARS

TO 150 THOUSAND DOLLARS.

want
I ~~WANT TO ALLOW~~ FAMILY FARMS

AND OTHER FAMILY ENTERPRISES TO PASS FROM ONE GENERATION

TO ANOTHER AND KEEP THEM IN THE FAMILY, INSTEAD OF SACRIFICING

THESE WONDERFUL PRODUCTS OF HARD WORK AND LOVE AND FAITH

TO SOME GOVERNMENT TAX COLLECTOR.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE POLICIES THAT THIS

ADMINISTRATION HAS FOLLOWED FOR THE PAST 20 MONTHS, AND SOME

WE INTEND TO FOLLOW FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS -- TO KEEP

AGRICULTURE STRONG AND KEEP IT GROWING IN THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA.

AND I AM VERY PROUD TO SAY THAT THE MAN IN CHARGE

OF THOSE POLICIES IS ONE OF THE FINEST PUBLIC SERVANTS EVER TO

COME FROM THE HOOSIER STATE -- SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

EARL BUTZ•

AS ~~YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW~~, I HAVE APPOINTED

EARL AS CHAIRMAN OF MY NEW CABINET-LEVEL AGRICULTURAL

POLICY COMMITTEE, WHICH WILL HAVE THE CENTRAL ROLE IN

DEVELOPING AND DIRECTING OUR NATION'S FOOD POLICIES.

WITH EARL BUTZ AS CHAIRMAN, YOU CAN BE SURE
THAT HIS STRONG, PLAIN-SPOKEN VOICE OF COMMON SENSE, AND HIS
ENTHUSIASTIC ADVOCACY OF THE AMERICAN FARMER WILL BE WELL
HEARD IN THE HIGHEST COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT + AND INDIANA
CAN BE VERY, VERY PROUD TO CLAIM THIS GOOD MAN AS A NATIVE
SON.

FINALLY, LET ME SAY THAT AS WE ENTER OUR THIRD
CENTURY OF INDEPENDENCE, AMERICA HAS EVERY RIGHT AND EVERY
REASON TO BE CONFIDENT ABOUT ITS FUTURE.

WHEN YOU PUT IT ALL TOGETHER -- AGRICULTURALLY,
ECONOMICALLY, TECHNOLOGICALLY, MILITARILY, AND MORALLY --
I AM PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN AND PROUD OF AMERICA.

I BELIEVE THE UNITED STATES IS IN THE SPRINGTIME
OF ITS LIFE, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH ALL OF YOU
TO MEET THE GREAT CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE, AND TO FILL THAT
FUTURE WITH NEW ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE NATION WE LOVE SO WELL.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. NOW I WILL BE GLAD TO
RESPOND TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

END OF TEXT