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Broadcast

DRAFT (Revised) -- HUMPHREY'S SPOT

Minneapolis, Minnesota, is in the heart of that great section of America known as the Midwest. It is here where farm and industry join hands—our economy is one that blends the products of the mines, the forests, the land and the factory.

The basic strength of our economic development lies in the productivity and the prosperity of our agriculture. To the people of this city farm problems and the condition of our agricultural economy is of paramount importance. The business prosperity of Middle Western cities is to a great degree dependent upon the income of the farmer. The long-range economic security of our section is definitely tied in with the fertility of our soil, the use and control of our rivers, the expansion of electrical power to our farms, and the sale and control of our surplus agricultural products.

Yes, our workers in the factories and shops are angry over the passage of restrictive labor legislation such as the Taft-Hartley Bill. Our veterans are disgusted with the inaction of the Congress in housing legislation. Our dependents and people of old age have been disappointed in the failure of the Congress to extend the benefits of social security programs. All of these things are a part of our general feeling about the failure of the 80th Republican dominated Congress.

But our people are wise to the tricks of reactionary leadership. We are not fooled by the smoke screen of controlling labor on the one hand, while carefully and methodically undermining the well-established and democratically conceived agricultural programs for our great farm population.

When the true story is told of this Republican controlled 80th Congress, the farmers of the Midwest will see that behind the smoke screen of labor legislation and false economy measures, the farmer of America has suffered more at the hand of reaction than any other single group.

The Republican dominated Congress has returned to its old policies of dealing with the farmer—plenty of talk and little action. Take the Rural Electrification program, for example. 135,000 farmers will be without electricity for another year as a result of this 80th Congress. Two and a half million farmers are without electricity in the United States. The farmer doesn't want a kerosene lamp in the atomic age. He wants electric light and electric power. The farmer knows that R.E.A. loans are self-liquidating. The money is eventually returned to the government with interest. He is now finding out that the arbitrary cut of the appropriation for the R.E.A. program has seriously threatened the forward progress of rural electrification.

In Minnesota we were allocated about $14\frac{1}{2}$ million dollars for R.E.A. purposes last year. This year we will have 10% less. Our farmers don't like this sort of economy. They resent the curtailment of such an essential program.

Here in the heart of the nation's farm belt, we know the importance of soil conservation and soil erosion control. We know that the American farmer is to be called upon not only to feed this nation, but the starving peoples of the world. Congress, however, ignored the pleas made in behalf of the farmer.

The soil conservation service, because of the false economy program sponsored by the Republican leadership, will be able to give only $\frac{2}{3}$ as much protection to our land as in prior years. Only 24 million acres of farm land can be protected under this the American farmers' own program, instead of the 35 million acres as was planned. After having drained the fertility of our soil during war years, it is obvious to any man interested in the long-range future of American agriculture that soil conservation was a priority program for the entire nation.

Then, too, this Republican controlled Congress drastically reduced the amount of funds available for agricultural research. While we were in the midst of counting our losses in soil as the result of disastrous floods and the blazing sun,

the Congress of the United States moved to penalize the American farmer by curtailment of research programs. The farmer knows that he does not have all the answers to the problems of erosion, water conservation, and land use. He expects his government to help him just as it helps business and industry.

Also important to our farmers, to the little farmer, to the returned veteran who wants to own his own farm, to the tenant farmer who wants to get a start in life, are the serious cuts made in the Farmer's Home Administration.

The great cities have been draining off the young men who would normally be engaged in agriculture. The movement from farm to city during the war years has seriously threatened the basic structure of the farm economy. The great landlords, the absentee Eastern landlords, have been increasing their holdings. Therefore, farm ownership has been decreasing. More and more tenant farmers have resulted. The national policy of aid to the small farmer in order that he can become an individual owner to hold and develop his own land, has been threatened and set back by political partisanship. Eastern Republicans, mostly representative of absentee landlords, men unacquainted with the great ranches and farms of the Middle and Far West, are setting the policy for the American farmer. The plain farmer, the man of little means who needs to get a start, will suffer from this sort of program. The present appropriation for the Farmer's Home Administration will permit only two-thirds of the amount of loan per county as was possible last year.

Chapter One to the betrayal of the American farmer has been written. The climax is yet to be seen. The Republicans in Congress are the authors of this betrayal. The American farmer knows it, and he will act in 1948.

I yield now * * * the honorable
John Sparkman, United States Senator
from Alabama, speaking from Birmingham



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