

*10 Great Issues  
Shape  
The Farmer's*

# **BILL OF RIGHTS**

**An address by Senator Hubert H.  
Humphrey at the 16th Annual  
GTA Convention in St. Paul,  
December 15, 1953**

# *The Farmer's* **'BILL OF RIGHTS'**

**Living in a legislated economy, farmers seek a fair price support law to be on a free, competitive basis with other economic groups.**

Minnesota's Senator Hubert H. Humphrey has long been a staunch supporter of the parity farm price campaign. The vigorous fight he has waged in Congress for constructive farm legislation gives authoritative background to his suggested 10-point "Bill of Rights" for agriculture as outlined at the Sixteenth Annual Convention of The Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association. Other convention speakers included Senator Milton R. Young (R., No. Dak.); Dr. C. Clyde Mitchell, chairman of the University of Nebraska Department of Agricultural Economics; James Patton, president of the National Farmers Union; Roy F. Hendrickson, executive secretary of the National Federation of Grain Cooperatives; James H. Dean, general manager of the Farmers Cooperative Commission company, Hutchinson, Kansas; Glenn Talbott, president of the North Dakota Farmers Union; and M. W. Thatcher, president of the National Federation of Grain Cooperatives and general manager of Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association. Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association is the nation's largest grain marketing co-op.

IT IS an honor to address this sixteenth annual banquet of the Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association—a great enterprise symbolic of the growth and progress of agriculture in the Midwest, and symbolic of what farm people can do working together.

It's a thrilling sight to look out over this vast gathering of farmers from throughout the great breadbasket of the Midwest.

This is America—the solid, determined, dependable America—the deep roots of democracy, embedded firmly in the soil.

America owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to its farmers of the past and of the present.

## **Food Our Basic Quest**

Every farmer in the nation can be justly proud of the great contribution American agriculture has made, and is still making, to our country's growth and progress.

Agriculture is basic to life itself. It is the life-line of food and fiber, without which we cannot survive.

Farmers were among our nation's founders. They paved the way for creation of our great nation of today, by producing in ever-increasing abundance the essentials of our survival—the food and fiber we needed for a growing and struggling nation of free people.

The struggle for food comes before all else. By the ever-increasing efficiency of America's farmers, in providing food not only for themselves but for others about them as well, they have made possible the release of manpower to create a mighty industrial as well as a rich agricultural empire in our new world.

## **There's Strength in the Land**

But agriculture has contributed more than food and fiber to our nation. It has contributed much to our basic strength of moral character, our hardiness, our respect for family ties. It has contributed our American pattern

of family farming, with its broad base of independent landholders as a firm foundation upon which democracy could survive and grow.

Is it any wonder, then, that I say America owes a great debt of gratitude to its farm people?

Farmers today, however, are seriously concerned about the future. They see strangely familiar symptoms of economic trouble. Farm prices have been falling too far and too fast. The parity ratio—the relation of what a farmer receives to what he must pay—has gone steadily downward. It has slumped to a national average of 90 per cent, the lowest since 1941. It's even lower in many states, and for many important commodities.

### **Farmer is the Keystone**

Farmers aren't the only ones concerned about these danger signs. The President and Congress are concerned. The business community is growing increasingly concerned. Why? Because we have learned that agricultural income and national prosperity go hand in hand. We have learned that depressions start on the farm. We have learned that the economic problems of agriculture are not just farm problems, but everybody's problems.

Agriculture is still basic to America's economy. Without a sound, efficient, abundant, prosperous agriculture, America's dynamic economy cannot long maintain its expanding pace of higher living standards and greater comforts of life for all.

We have learned that lesson in the past—the hard way. We must never forget it.

There is a public interest responsibility toward agriculture that cannot be ignored.

Our government early recognized the public's interest and the nation's welfare in a strong agriculture, in a family-farm type of agriculture, by opening up vast public lands to homesteading in order to encourage agricultural expansion and farm ownership.

By making such opportunities available, the nation was repaid many times the value of its investment in agriculture's future.

And, if you'll pardon an aside, I very much doubt if the moral fiber of our pioneering fathers was corrupted by accepting that homestead subsidy of free land!

### **How Skids Were Greased**

As our nation embarked upon its industrial development, it was business and industry—not agriculture—that first shunned the risks of the "free market," and asked for aid and protection by law—the tariffs, the grants and subsidies, the power of regulating production—and competition—to assure reasonable profits.

As a new aristocracy of industrial barons developed in our country, their influence upon government resulted in public policy being designed more and more to serve their own ends—at the expense of American agriculture, and the American workingman.

Our economy grew out of balance, and weaker became the foundation upon which it all was based.

The rich grew richer, and the poor grew poorer, until the bubble had to be burst.

I need not, I am sure, remind you at length of the great depression. Most of us remember all too well that tragic period in our economic and political history.

Agriculture, as usual, felt its impact first, longest, and hardest.

Agriculture was and is today the bellwether of our economy. It is where the symptoms first strike, then spread to the Main Streets, the factories, and the homes of all America, rural and city alike.

### **Parity Forged In '20's**

Out of that depression of the '20's and '30's, we learned that the cost of depression is far greater, in money and human misery, than any cost of maintaining a sound and prosperous nation.

From the despair of the great depression, agriculture united in a historic fight for rightful recognition of the importance of its role in American life. It brought forth a great concept so in keeping with the principles of American Democracy that it has earned a permanent place in America's economic life—the parity concept, of equality for agriculture.

All of the efforts down through the years by our great organizations of farmers became solidly pin-pointed toward one major purpose:

The clear declaration of public policy that prices and income of farmers should be maintained on a basis of parity with industrial wages and industrial prices.

None of us should ever forget the fight it took to establish the parity concept of equality for agriculture as the law of our land.

### **A Few Led the Way**

The great voices of that earlier historic battle for farm parity—the voices of the agricultural statesmen of that day, Ed O'Neal of the American Farm Bureau Federation, Louis Taber of the Grange, and yes, the great voice of your own hard-hitting Bill Thatcher—these voices refused to be silenced. They knew they were right. They knew they were not only fighting for farmers. They knew they were fighting for the sound economic welfare of America, for the country they loved.

It wasn't an easy fight. Powerful forces were arrayed against them. A strange coalition of the uninformed, the ill-advised, the men of little faith and little vision, looking backward instead of ahead, was moulded together and manipulated as a "front" against agriculture.

Let me make myself clear: Fair-minded Americans—and I think most Americans are fair-minded—have never been against decent prices and fair and equal treatment for agriculture, or for anyone else. But always in any society, there are a few who refuse to look beyond their own money-counting tables, regardless of the public interest that may be involved.

It is always these vocal few who raise the entirely false cry of government interference with "free enterprise," when their own toes are stepped upon in order to assure the benefits and blessings of free enterprise to all the rest of us.

But all the misleading attempts to distort agriculture's just plea for equality failed.

### **The Legislated Economy**

We became realists about our economy, and the world we live in.

We recognized that there no longer exists a complete free exchange of goods and services, a complete "free market." Instead, we faced up to the fact that we work and live in the midst of protective regulations by government, firm prices administered by business, fixed costs established by accepted standards of fair wages and reasonable profits in other segments of our economy. Federal reserve regulations, utility and transportation rate fixing, tariffs to protect industry, minimum wage laws, the fair trade practices act to eliminate unfair price-cutting, and subsidies to shipping firms, airlines, and newspapers are but a few of many examples.

The farmer has never lost his spirit of independence, his willingness to work, and work hard.

### **Fair Play Needed**

But the world about him has changed. The ways of farming have changed. The world in which he must compete for survival has changed. Man-made changes have hemmed him in on all sides by a complex, legislated economy, in which he has too often become the forgotten man.

None of us can thwart the tide of change. Our task is to keep abreast of change, to keep pace with the progress and the problems it creates, and to look to the future.

If the farmer must compete in a legislated economy, to ask him alone to exist by the simple standards of a

bygone generation is like asking our superhighways of today to be governed by traffic rules of the horse-and-buggy days. Only confusion and tragedy can result.

In a democracy dedicated to serving all the people, what is wrong with farmers asking the government—their government—to remember that they, too, must be able to keep pace with the times, and must have traffic rules that do not leave them by the wayside as everyone else zooms past on the highway of modern life and modern living?

Government—your government—has the obligation, under our constitution, to promote the general welfare—not the welfare of the few at the expense of the many.

Congress recognized that obligation in declaring it to be the policy of our country that prices and income of farmers should be maintained on a basis of parity with other segments of our economy. With full parity as its goal, our government launched a courageous and historic series of national farm programs aimed at achieving that objective.

### **Men Of Grit Combine**

From time to time those programs have been changed, improved, and adapted to agriculture's changing needs—but always the same objective has been spelled out—the objective of parity prices and parity income.

Let me say right now, that it has taken nonpartisan support from the great farm states of our nation to maintain our strides toward the objective, and to withstand the powerful pressure that would divert us. It has taken the whole-hearted support of men who know and understand agriculture, and men with plenty of gumption to stand up and be counted—sometimes against their own colleagues—like my good friend, the distinguished Republican Senator Milt Young of North Dakota. I was proud to fight shoulder to shoulder with him in the great battle of 1949 for the Russell-Young amendment, to keep our farm program from being diverted away from its historic objective.

We have made progress—tremendous progress—under the stabilizing influence of our national farm programs.

### **Still Far from Goal**

Hand in hand with the concept of "fair returns" for agriculture came other great strides forward in American farm life—reasonable credit, sound conservation, rural electrification. We've tossed out the kerosene lanterns, and brightened the rural countryside with electricity. We've eased the drudgery of farm life by bringing the blessings of modern conveniences and modern power to the farm. We've checked the depletion and

waste of America's potential productivity, by lifting the face of the rural countryside through sound conservation farming. We've strengthened the opportunities for farm ownership, by a credit structure geared to agriculture's needs. We breathed new life, new hope, new opportunity into a prostrate rural America—and with it, we breathed new strength and new stability into the entire American economy.

From such gains we can never turn back. Yet the real job has just begun. We are still far from our goal, far from the original objective of equality which agriculture started out to achieve. And there are still forces at work to divert us from that objective, both through misguided differences of opinion over methods of achieving it, and deliberate intent to keep us from achieving it. Together, they make a formidable foe.

### **Labor Recalls Past**

By devious means, they seek to divide and divert the farm unity of this country. They try to turn consumers against farmers, to turn farmers against labor, and labor against farmers, and to even turn farmers against farmers—to split your own household against you.

They are failing on one front. American labor is still the farmer's best friend. They are your customers, yet they know you are their customers, too. They, too, haven't forgotten grim lessons of the past; and they are worried about dangerous symptoms of the present. They want farmers to have decent prices and decent incomes, just as they want such goals for themselves. They know that only in a well-balanced, expanding economy can higher living standards be maintained for all. Farmers need more of such understanding among consumers.

### **Farm Ranks Breached**

But the forces historically aligned against you have gained on another front. They have split the ranks of agriculture itself.

At a time when unity of purpose is needed in agriculture as never before since the great crusade of 1933, new leadership of some major farm groups has wavered from the very objectives upon which their own organizations grew great and powerful. In the heat of controversy over how such objectives can best be achieved, willingly or unwillingly, they have allowed themselves to be diverted from the objectives themselves.

Where now are the voices of Ed O'Neil and Louis Taber, forceful voices crying out for full parity, for full equality of economic opportunity for agriculture?

Thank God the great voice of Bill Thatcher has never been stilled, has never wavered, has never been side-

tracked from the main line of agriculture's fight for full economic equality!

You can be thankful, too, for the vigorous leadership of Jim Patton as President of the National Farmers Union.

### **GTA Paced the Fight**

Every farmer-stockholder of GTA can be proud of the great record of achievement and service of this cooperative grain marketing organization. It has done more than serve you well. It has fought for you. Along with the Farmers Union, with which it is affiliated, it has always been in the forefront of the struggle for a square deal for all farmers.

Agriculture needs such vigorous champions today.

Agriculture would do well, today, to harken back to the wise words of Ed O'Neil in 1941, when he prophetically said:

"This issue raised is very clear . . . that issue is whether the parity objective is to be a reality for American farmers, or whether it is to be merely an illusive mirage, constantly dangled before the eyes of farmers, but which they are never permitted to attain."

Now, as then, that is the issue.

The issue is joined; the battle lines are being drawn.

### **Some Want Jungle Law**

On the one hand, we have those lacking faith in democracy, men of little vision and less confidence in America's ability to maintain a dynamic, expanding economy. They are the "flexers," holding to a philosophy of scarcity, an outmoded philosophy of survival by jungle laws alone.

On the other hand, we have those holding firm to the conviction that government in a democracy must promote the general welfare, with equality of economic growth and progress.

Between these groups is a large segment of the American population which, unfortunately, fails to fully realize how much everyone is involved. They have taken our abundance for granted. America has never suffered scarcity. As a result, many haven't stopped to realize, perhaps, how our abundance has kept prices to consumers reasonable. A smaller percentage of our income is required to purchase food and clothes in America than anywhere else on earth, freeing more money for purchase of homes, automobiles, television sets and other products keeping the wheels of industry and commerce spinning. All of us should be concerned about what makes that abundance of food possible. We should be looking ahead, too, at our population growth of 2,700,000 a year—new people who have to be fed and clothed



and provided with jobs. They, too, have a stake in this struggle.

The issue is not whether the present farm programs are perfect.

It is whether we hold firm to the basic objective of those farm programs—the right of farmers to equal economic opportunity—while seeking to improve our means of achieving it.

The challenge is to go ahead, rather than turn backwards.

With our eyes firmly fixed on the same historic goal, there is much more that we can and must do—and do now.

### **A Time for Courage**

We must point closer to the income objectives set forth time after time in our farm legislation, the "take-home pay" the farmer receives. We must raise our sights, rather than lower them, toward effective devices to achieve full parity.

We need to extend price protection to the major income-producing perishable commodities, as well as the storable products. To achieve such price protection, we must use the methods or combination of methods most effective for each commodity. A diversified agriculture may call for a diversified approach. On those commodities where the price support system has worked well, both to the benefit of the producer and the consumer, let there be no tinkering or tampering. For those commodities, particularly in the perishable field, where experience may reveal the need for improved methods of price protection, let us have the courage and the imagination to try new methods. This is within the American spirit. We are not hidebound by doctrine or theory. We are a practical people. As such, all of us want to see food used, not wasted.

### **Long Plan Required**

We need longer-range assurance of stability for agriculture. The American farmer justly deserves a long-range policy he can depend upon. Temporary extension of legislation, year by year, does not represent a policy; it represents only expediency. Constant uncertainty as to the long-range agricultural policy is within itself a source of instability within the market place. Farmers must not be left to the discretionary whims of any Secretary of Agriculture. Discretionary authority will always mean indecision and uncertainty; mandatory protection under the law means certainty and stability. The time is at hand to quit treating agricultural policy as if it were a

biennial political football, to be kicked around every election year.

Effective price protection, of course, is just a foundation.

### **Import Curbs Vital**

We need to develop new outlets and uses for our food and fiber. We need to learn to live with abundance, and use it wisely for the greatest good of humanity. To protect and expand areas of freedom in this world, we must think of full stomachs as well as full cartridge belts.

We need expanded international trade, but we need, at the same time, common-sense protection against certain groups of farmers having to suffer economic losses amounting to more than their fair share of the burden of maintaining our foreign trade policies. I refer specifically to the increasingly serious problem of competing barley, rye and oat imports from Canada. I want to commend both Senators Bill Langer and Milt Young for their leadership in seeking the proper use of the protective administrative devices Congress has had the wisdom to provide for such a situation, a fight in which I have given my wholehearted support.

We need assurances that production restrictions shall not be placed upon any important food commodity at any point below the total of domestic consumer need, plus normal exports and an adequate safety reserve, including a special reserve for use in strengthening our foreign policy. In acreage restrictions on wheat, we need recognition of the differentials in types and qualities, some of which are in short supply while others are in surplus. Wheat is not just wheat; it has many varieties, used for different purposes. Durum is an example of a variety of which we need more, rather than less.

### **Conservation**

We need adequate incentive premiums to convert "diverted acres" under production restrictions to soil-building conservation practices, rather than to other competing and soil-depleting crops.

We must make greater progress in conservation. We must harness the destructive force of excess water, and convert it to constructive use. We must extend rural telephone service to farm homes of America, just as we have extended electric lights and power. We must continue our progress in research and marketing efficiency.

Obviously, there is much that can be done to improve our farm legislation—without taking away any of the advantages it now offers. It is in that spirit Congress must approach its task of writing firm, constructive, long-range farm legislation at its forthcoming session. And, it is in that spirit, I am sure, that my Senate colleagues

of the great agricultural Midwest and South will stand firmly together, regardless of party.

American agriculture, at long last, has come of age.

It accepts responsibility to be concerned about the well-being of all the American people.

### **Don't Want Favoritism**

Farmers asked only what is rightfully theirs, by their heritage as American citizens: The right of equal treatment and equal respect, under the law of our land.

I know that is your conviction. I know it has long been mine. But it is time that all the American people recognize and accepted that right of equality for agriculture. It's time they accepted it as in the best interest of the entire nation—not just for the benefit of farmers alone.

Tonight marks the 162nd anniversary of our nation's Bill of Rights. As a nation, we are dedicated to preservation of these rights of all the people, rights we hold to be inalienable. We guard and protect these rights zealously. They are the very cornerstone of our democracy.

But, perhaps it is time that we, as a nation, also dedicate ourselves to preservation of certain rights for the American farmer, as the custodian of the very basis of our national life.

### **Farm "Bill Of Rights"**

I propose as a standard from which agriculture should never again retreat this "Farmer's Bill of Rights":

1. The right to full equality of economic opportunity.
2. The right for improved standards of rural living.
3. The right of reasonable protection against natural hazards.
4. The right to extend agricultural free enterprise through cooperative action.
5. The right to public cooperation and assistance in saving the soil.
6. The right to preserve the social and human values of family farming.
7. The right to decent land tenure which would encourage the desirable goal of farm ownership.
8. The right to a democratic voice in his own farm program.
9. The right to benefits of an expanding world trade.
10. The right to a long-term program of food storage to encourage abundance.

Much could be said about each of these fundamental rights for agriculture. They involve the right to a fair share of the national income for agriculture through

more reasonable assurance of fair rewards and adequate incentives for those who efficiently and abundantly provide for the food and fiber needs of the nation. They mean modern schools, roads, housing, and health facilities and services in rural areas, equal to those afforded city folks. They mean protection against forces beyond agriculture's own control, through adequate farm credit facilities geared to agriculture's needs; through crop insurance, within the farmer's ability to participate; through disaster aid when needed to protect both the public and the individual interest; and through price support programs designed to contribute stability to our entire economy, and to protect the farmer from being left at the mercy of speculators.

### **Co-ops Need Freedom**

The "Bill of Rights" for agriculture means the right of farmers to self-help through forming cooperatives for marketing farm products, purchasing farm supplies, and providing essential services, such as extending the benefits of electricity and telephones in rural areas, with legal protection against efforts to curtail the effective functioning of such farm cooperatives. They mean the right of aid in conserving the nation's agricultural resources—our productive lands, water supplies, and forests—so that these resources will be permanently useful for the benefit of generations to come.

They mean adequate landlord-tenant arrangements for sharing the income that the soil produces, with adequate opportunity for tenants to advance up the ladder toward farm ownership. They mean an effective voice for the farmer in his own destiny such as farmer-participation in both administration and development of farm programs through democratically-elected farmer committeemen, and self-determination of the needs of adjusting production to a reasonable balance with demand through voluntary farmer-referendums. They mean facilitating the flow of farm exports to broaden the base of our farm economy.

### **A Rightful Heritage**

The "Farmer's Bill of Rights" means greater public recognition of the wisdom and necessity for maintaining at adequate levels our storage "food banks" of feed and food reserves safeguarding the nation from any eventuality. They mean public policies making more effective use of the abundance farmers are capable of producing, policies enabling the farmer to see his food used wisely, rather than be wasted; to see the output of his land and his toil make its utmost contribution toward stamping out hunger and deprivation at home and abroad, and serving as the humanitarian arm of

the nations' foreign policy, in our efforts to create a better and more peaceful world.

These, I believe, are basic rights of American agriculture.

They are not new rights. They are not rights of special privilege, gained through misuse or abuse of tremendous power over the lifelines of the nation's food supply.

### **We've Earned the Right**

Rather, they are rights of historic precedent, earned by the great and continuing contribution of agriculture to American life—the fulfillment of the nation's needs in peace or war, in good times or bad, at personal profit or personal loss.

They are rights set forth as public policy, time after time, in the objectives of legislation enacted by the Congress of the United States.

They need reiterating now only as a guiding beacon of light, cast upon the darkness of confusion surrounding current controversy over America's farm policy.

They must be just as zealously guarded, against forces which seek to destroy them, as we guard other historic rights, privileges, and responsibilities of freedom in our democracy.

That, I believe, should be American agriculture's rallying point for unity today—and the nation's challenge to fully exemplify the meaning of democracy as equal opportunity for all.



# HEAR THATCHER DISCUSS VITAL FARM ISSUES

Hear his comments and analyses each  
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## **K W L M**

Willmar, Minn. 12:15-12:30 P.M.

## **K M H L**

Marshall, Minn. 12:15-12:30 P.M.

## **K W O A**

Worthington, Minn. 12:15-12:30 P.M.

## **K C J B**

Minot, N. D. 12:15-12:30 P.M.

## **W D A Y**

Fargo, N. D. 1:00- 1:15 P.M.

## **K F Y R**

Bismarck, N. D. 1:15- 1:30 P.M.  
(12:15-12:30 Mountain Time)

## **K S J B**

Jamestown, N. D. 12:15-12:30 P.M.

## **W N A X**

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## **K O J M**

Havre, Mont. 6:50- 6:55 A.M.

## **K M O N**

Great Falls, Mont. 7:10- 7:15 A.M.

**Ship  
GTA  
the Co-op Way**

THE FARMER'S "BILL OF RIGHTS"

Address by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) at the 16th annual dinner of Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association, St. Paul, Minn., Tuesday, December 15, 1953. (7:30 p.m.)

Mr. Thatcher, Senator Young, other distinguished guests, and Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed a pleasure and an honor to address this sixteenth annual banquet of the Grain Terminal Association -- a great enterprise symbolic of the growth and progress of agriculture in the Midwest, and symbolic of what farm people can do working together.

It's an inspiring and thrilling sight to look out over this vast gathering of farmers from throughout the great breadbasket of the Midwest.

This is America -- the solid, determined, dependable America -- the deep roots of democracy, embedded firmly in the soil.

America owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to its farmers, the farmers of the past and of the present.

Every farmer in this auditorium, yes, every farmer in the nation, can be justly proud of the great contribution American agriculture has made, and is STILL making, to our country's growth and progress.

Agriculture is basic to life itself. It is the life-line of food and fiber, without which we cannot survive.

Farmers were among our nation's founders. They paved the way for creation of our great nation of today, by producing in ever-increasing abundance the essentials of our survival -- the food and fiber we needed for a growing and struggling nation of free people.

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Is it any wonder, then, that I say America owes a great debt of gratitude to its farm people?

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We recognized that there no longer exists a complete free exchange of goods and services, a complete "free market." Instead, we faced up to the fact that we work and live in the midst of protective regulations by Government, firm prices administered by business, fixed costs established by accepted standards of fair wages and reasonable profits in other segments of our economy. Federal reserve regulations, utility and transportation rate fixing, tariffs to protect industry, minimum wage laws, the fair trade practices act to eliminate unfair price-cutting, and subsidies to shipping firms, airlines, and newspapers are but a few of many examples.

The farmer has never lost his spirit of independence, his willingness to work, and work hard.

But the world about him has changed. The ways of farming have changed. The world in which he must compete for survival has changed. Man-made changes have hemmed him in on all sides by a complex, legislated economy, in which he has too often become the forgotten man.

None of us can thwart the tide of change. The hands of time can never be turned backward. Our task is to keep abreast of change, to keep pace with the progress and the problems it creates, and to look to the future.

If the farmer must compete in a legislated economy, to ask him alone to exist by the simple standards of a bygone generation is like asking our superhighways of today to be governed by traffic rules of the horse-and-buggy days. Only confusion and tragedy can result.

In a democracy dedicated to serving all the people, what is wrong with farmers asking the Government -- their Government -- to remember that they, too, must be able to keep pace with the times, and must have traffic rules that do not leave them by the wayside as everyone else zooms past on the highway of modern life and modern living?

Government -- your Government -- has the obligation, under our constitution, to promote the general welfare -- not the welfare of the few at the expense of the many.

Congress recognized that obligation in declaring it to be the policy of our country that prices and income of farmers should be maintained on a basis of parity with other segments of our economy. With full parity as its goal, our Government launched a courageous and historic series of national farm programs aimed at achieving that objective.

From time to time those programs have been changed, improved, and adapted to agriculture's changing needs -- but always the same objective has been spelled out -- the objective of parity prices and parity income.

Let me say right now, that it has taken nonpartisan support from the great farm states of our nation to maintain our strides toward the objective, and to withstand the powerful pressure that would divert us. It has taken the wholehearted support of men who know and understand agriculture, and men with plenty of gumption to stand up and be counted -- sometimes against their own colleagues -- like my good friend, the distinguished Republican Senator Milt Young of North Dakota. I was proud to fight shoulder to shoulder with him in the great battle of 1949 for the Russell-Young amendment, to keep our farm program from being

diverted away from its historic objective.

We have made progress -- tremendous progress -- under the stabilizing influence of our national farm programs.

Hand in hand with the concept of "fair returns" for agriculture came other great strides forward in American farm life -- reasonable credit, sound conservation, rural electrification. We've tossed out the kerosene lanterns, and brightened the rural countryside with electricity. We've eased the drudgery of farm life by bringing the blessings of modern conveniences and modern power to the farm. We've checked the depletion and waste of America's potential productivity, by lifting the face of the rural countryside through sound conservation farming. We've strengthened the opportunities for farm ownership, by a credit structure geared to agriculture's needs. We breathed new life, new hope, new opportunity into a prostrate rural America -- and with it, we breathed new strength and new stability into the entire American economy.

From such gains we can never turn back. Yet the real job has just begun. We are still far from our goal, far from the original objective of equality which agriculture started out to achieve. And there are still forces at work to divert us from that objective, both through misguided differences of opinion over methods of achieving it, and deliberate intent to keep us from achieving it. Together, they make a formidable foe.

By devious means, they seek to divide and divert the farm unity of this country. They try to turn consumers against farmers, to turn farmers against labor, and labor against farmers, and to even turn farmers against farmers -- to split your own household against you.

They are failing on one front. American labor is still the farmer's best friend. They are your customers, yet they know you are their customers, too. They too haven't forgotten grim lessons of the past; and they are worried about dangerous symptoms of the present. They want farmers to have decent prices and

decent incomes, just as they want such goals for themselves. They know that only in a well-balanced, expanding economy, can higher living standards be maintained for all. Farmers need more of such understanding among consumers.

But the forces historically aligned against you have gained on another front. They have split the ranks of agriculture itself.

At a time when unity of purpose is needed in agriculture as never before since the great crusade of 1933, new leadership of some major farm groups has wavered from the very objectives upon which their own organizations grew great and powerful. In the heat of controversy over how such objectives can best be achieved, willingly or unwillingly, they have allowed themselves to be diverted from the objectives themselves.

Where now are the voices of Ed O'Neal and Louis Taber, forceful voices crying out for full parity, for full equality of economic opportunity for agriculture?

Thank God the great voice of Bill Thatcher has never been stilled, has never wavered, has never been sidetracked from the main line of agriculture's fight for full economic equality!

You can be thankful, too, for the vigorous leadership of Jim Patton as President of the National Farmers Union.

Every farmer-stockholder of GTA can be proud of the great record of achievement and service of this cooperative grain marketing organization. It has done more than serve you well. It has fought for you. Along with the Farmers Union, with which it is affiliated, it has always been in the forefront of the struggle for a square deal for all farmers.

Agriculture needs such vigorous champions today.

Agriculture would do well, today, to harken back to the wise words of Ed O'Neal in 1941, when he prophetically said:

"This issue raised is very clear....that issue is whether the parity objective is to be a reality for American farmers, or whether it is to be merely an



illusive mirage, constantly dangled before the eyes of farmers, but which they are never permitted to attain."

Now, as then, that is the issue.

The issue is joined; the battle lines are being drawn.

On the one hand, we have those lacking faith in democracy, men of little vision and less confidence in America's ability to maintain a dynamic, expanding economy. They are the "flexers," holding to a philosophy of scarcity, an outmoded philosophy of survival by jungle laws alone.

On the other hand, we have those holding firm to the conviction that government in a democracy must promote the general welfare, with equality of economic growth and progress.

Between these groups is a large segment of the American population which, unfortunately, fails to fully realize how much everyone is involved. They have taken our abundance for granted. America has never suffered scarcity. As a result, many haven't stopped to realize, perhaps, how our abundance has kept prices to consumers reasonable. A smaller percentage of our income is required to purchase food and clothes in America than anywhere else on earth, freeing more money for purchase of homes, automobiles, television sets and other products keeping the wheels of industry and commerce spinning. All of us should be concerned about what makes that abundance of food possible. We should be looking ahead, too, at our population growth of 2,700,000 a year -- new people who have to be fed and clothed and provided with jobs. They, too, have a stake in this struggle.

The issue is not whether the present farm programs are perfect.

It is whether we hold firm to the basic objective of those farm programs -- the right of farmers to equal economic opportunity -- while seeking to improve our means of achieving it.

The challenge is to go ahead, rather than turn backwards.



With our eyes firmly fixed on the same historic goal, there is much more that we can and must do -- and do now.

We must point closer to the income objectives set forth time after time in our farm legislation, the "take-home pay" the farmer receives. We must raise our sights, rather than lower them, toward effective devices to achieve full parity.

We need to extend price protection to the major income-producing perishable commodities, as well as the storable products. To achieve such price protection, we must use the methods or combination of methods most effective for each commodity. A diversified agriculture may call for a diversified approach. On those commodities where the price support system has worked well, both to the benefit of the producer and the consumer, let there be no tinkering or tampering. For those commodities, particularly in the perishable field, where experience may reveal the need for improved methods of price protection, let us have the courage and the imagination to try new methods. This is within the American spirit. We are not hidebound by doctrine or theory. We are a practical people. As such, all of us want to see food used, not wasted.

We need longer-range assurance of stability for agriculture. The American farmer justly deserves a long-range policy he can depend upon. Temporary extension of legislation, year by year, does not represent a policy; it represents only expediency. Constant uncertainty as to the long-range agricultural policy is within itself a source of instability within the market place. Farmers must not be left to the discretionary whims of any Secretary of Agriculture. Discretionary authority will always mean indecision and uncertainty; mandatory protection under the law means certainty and stability. The time is at hand to quit treating agricultural policy as if it were a biennial political football, to be kicked around every election year.

Effective price protection, of course, is just a foundation.

We need to develop new outlets and uses for our food and fiber. We need to learn to live with abundance, and use it wisely for the greatest good of humanity. To protect and expand areas of freedom in this world, we must think of full stomachs as well as full cartridge belts.

We need expanded international trade, but we need, at the same time, common-sense protection against certain groups of farmers having to suffer economic losses amounting to more than their fair share of the burden of maintaining our foreign trade policies. I refer specifically to the increasingly serious problem of competing barley, rye and oat imports from Canada. I want to commend both Senators Bill Langer and Milt Young for their leadership in seeking the proper use of the protective administrative devices Congress has had the wisdom to provide for such a situation, a fight in which I have given my wholehearted support.

We need assurances that production restrictions shall not be placed upon any important food commodity at any point below the total of domestic consumer need, plus normal exports and an adequate safety reserve, including a special reserve for use in strengthening our foreign policy. In acreage restrictions on wheat, we need recognition of the differentials in types and qualities, some of which are in short supply while others are in surplus. Wheat is not just wheat; it has many varieties, used for different purposes. Durum is an example of a variety of which we need more, rather than less.

We need adequate incentive premiums to convert "diverted acres" under production restrictions to soil-building conservation practices, rather than to other competing and soil-depleting crops.

We must make greater progress in conservation. We must harness the destructive force of excess water, and convert it to constructive use. We must extend rural telephone service to farm homes of America, just as we have extended electric lights and power. We must continue our progress in research and marketing efficiency.

Obviously, there is much that can be done to improve our farm legislation -- without taking away any of the advantages it now offers. It is in that spirit Congress must approach its task of writing firm, constructive, long-range farm legislation at its forthcoming session. And, it is in that spirit, I am sure, that my Senate colleagues of the great agricultural Midwest and South will stand firmly together, regardless of party.

American agriculture, at long last, has come of age.

It accepts responsibility to be concerned about the well-being of all the American people.

Farmers ask only what is rightfully theirs, by their heritage as American citizens: The right of equal treatment and equal respect, under the law of our land.

I know that is your conviction. I know it has long been mine. But it is time that ALL the American people recognized and accepted that right of equality for agriculture. It's time they accepted it as in the best interest of the entire nation -- not just for the benefit of farmers alone.

Tonight marks the 162nd anniversary of our nation's Bill of Rights. As a nation, we are dedicated to preservation of these rights of all the people, rights we hold to be inalienable. We guard and protect these rights zealously. They are the very cornerstone of our democracy.

But, perhaps it is time that we, as a nation, also dedicate ourselves to preservation of certain rights for the American farmer, as the custodian of the very basis of our national life.

I propose as a standard from which agriculture should never again retreat this "Farmer's Bill of Rights":

1. The right to full equality of economic opportunity.
2. The right for improved standards of rural living.
3. The right of reasonable protection against natural hazards.

4. The right to extend agricultural free enterprise through cooperative action.
5. The right to public cooperation and assistance in saving the soil.
6. The right to preserve the social and human values of family farming.
7. The right to decent land tenure which would encourage the desirable goal of farm ownership.
8. The right to a democratic voice in his own farm programs.
9. The right to benefits of an expanding world trade.
10. The right to a long-term program of food storage to encourage abundance.

Much could be said about each of these fundamental rights for agriculture. They involve the right to a fair share of the national income for agriculture through more reasonable assurance of fair rewards and adequate incentives for those who efficiently and abundantly provide for the food and fiber needs of the nation. They mean modern schools, roads, housing, and health facilities and services in rural areas, equal to those afforded city folks. They mean protection against forces beyond agriculture's own control, through adequate farm credit facilities geared to agriculture's needs; through crop insurance, within the farmer's ability to participate; through disaster aid when needed to protect both the public and the individual interest; and through price support programs designed to contribute stability to our entire economy, and to protect the farmer from being left at the mercy of speculators.

The "Bill of Rights" for agriculture means the right of farmers to self-help through forming cooperatives for marketing farm products, purchasing farm supplies, and providing essential services, such as extending the benefits of electricity and telephones in rural areas, with legal protection against efforts



to curtail the effective functioning of such farm cooperatives. They mean the right of aid in conserving the nation's agricultural resources -- our productive lands, water supplies, and forests -- so that these resources will be permanently useful for the benefit of generations to come.

They mean adequate landlord-tenant arrangements for sharing the income that the soil produces, with adequate opportunity for tenants to advance up the ladder toward farm ownership. They mean an effective voice for the farmer in his own destiny such as farmer-participation in both administration and development of farm programs through democratically-elected farmer committeemen, and self-determination of the needs of adjusting production to a reasonable balance with demand through voluntary farmer-referendums. They mean facilitating the flow of farm exports to broaden the base of our farm economy.

The "Farmer's Bill of Rights" means greater public recognition of the wisdom and necessity for maintaining at adequate levels our storage "food banks" of feed and food reserves safeguarding the nation from any eventuality. They mean public policies making more effective use of the abundance farmers are capable of producing, policies enabling the farmer to see his food used wisely, rather than be wasted; to see the output of his land and his toil make its utmost contribution toward stamping out hunger and deprivation at home and abroad, and serving as the humanitarian arm of the nation's foreign policy, in our efforts to create a better and more peaceful world.

These, I believe, are basic rights of American agriculture.

They are not new rights. They are not rights of special privilege, gained through misuse or abuse of tremendous power over the lifelines of the nation's food supply.

Rather, they are rights of historic precedent, earned by the great and continuing contribution of agriculture to American life -- the fulfillment of the nation's needs in peace or war, in good times or bad, at personal profit or personal loss.



They are rights set forth as public policy, time after time, in the objectives of legislation enacted by the Congress of the United States.

They need reiterating now only as a guiding beacon of light, cast upon the darkness of confusion surrounding current controversy over America's farm policy.

They must be just as zealously guarded, against forces which seek to destroy them, as we guard other historic rights, privileges, and responsibilities of freedom in our democracy.

That, I believe, should be American agriculture's rallying point for unity today -- and the nation's challenge to fully exemplify the meaning of democracy as equal opportunity for all.

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