

RADIO SCRIPT -- February 28, 1957

TURKEYS

*J. Humphrey*

This is Senator Hubert Humphrey, speaking to you from my office in Washington.

We public officials always like to hear from our constituents, but it is a good idea to know the facts before you wire or write all-out support for various measures. Never hesitate to inform us of your feelings about what should be done, because we welcome your advice. Unfortunately, however, many people just indicate they are "for" or "against" certain measures, and then by their own letters reveal they do not really know what is in the measure. When that becomes obvious, it just lessens the weight their letters may carry to the public official to whom they are writing -- as he knows they are just expressing somebody else's opinion, at somebody else's request, instead of their own. ~~People who plunge into "inspired" propaganda campaigns just on the basis~~

of distorted charges that may be circulated about a bill, without  
taking the trouble to find out more about it, often end up with  
red faces when they do finally learn the facts.

I am mentioning this because of a glaring example that  
occured this week just before Senate hearings on compulsory poultry  
inspection, which the poultry industry says it wants and for which  
I am sponsor of one of the three bills being considered. Apparently,  
many sincere but ~~misguided~~ <sup>misinformed</sup> Minnesota turkey producers fell prey to  
false information about these bills. On the basis of completely  
unfounded and actually ridiculous alarm-stirring letters sent out  
by a Chicago employee of the National Turkey Federation to 1,800  
Minnesota turkey producers and processors, giving a totally distorted  
version of my bill and appealing for a mass protest, we were flooded  
with almost identical wires and letters complaining about things that  
were never in the bill in the first place.

Fortunately, Minnesota spokesmen down here for the hearing  
learned the truth was far different from what they had been led to

believe. During the hearings not one of the charges circulated around Minnesota about my bill were substantiated. Quite the contrary, the evidence indicated the hired propagandist stirring up this protest must have been talking about somebody else's bill that was killed last year.

Efforts to stimulate increased consumption of chickens and turkeys through assuring the public of the wholesomeness of poultry products, and protecting it against any danger of carrying disease to humans through poultry, are given an unfortunate setback by such misguided "pressure tactics". It raises questions as to the sincerity of the industry in saying it wants compulsory inspection.

*+ Consumer groups*  
Public health officials have long been insistent that better protection must be provided against transmitting disease through poultry. ~~Many consumer groups have joined that clamor,~~ and poultry marketing will suffer unless something is done about it. Leading industry spokesmen have said they agree, and wanted compulsory poultry

inspection to restore public confidence. Two bills were introduced for that purpose, but failed to meet what health officials say are minimum safeguards. It appeared their concern might result in far more drastic legislation being again pushed to shift such inspection out of the Department of Agriculture and into the Food and Drug Administration. Such a move has always been opposed by the poultry industry. Yet that is just about what would have happened if it had not been for my bill -- charting a "middle ground" for protection of public health and the industry as well, with a workable plan for a separate poultry division in the Department of Agriculture and with specific exemption for small farm producer-processors. My compromise bill satisfied health officials and consumer groups who had wanted more extreme measures in the past. [ It has been approved by this Administration's Food and Drug Administration. Some of the changes I proposed have been approved by the Department of Agriculture. My bill incorporated at least the minimum recommendations of the Association of Food and Drug Officials of the

United States, the Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, The American Public Health Association, the Association of State Territorial Health Officers, the Conference of Public Health Veterinarians, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the American Nurses Association, the American Association of University Women, the National Consumers League, Housewives United, the National Board of the YWCA, the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, and the Farmers Union.

~~If the poultry industry is sincere in wanting to gain public confidence in its product through an inspection law, that seems quite an impressive group to oppose. Yet that is what most of Minnesota's poultry and turkey spokesmen were doing unwittingly. I am sure~~

By this time Minnesota farm people should know that I am not going to ignore their best interest. They should not let themselves get alarmed by any propaganda attacks ~~and~~ from outside the state, usually inspired by big packers <sup>+ processors</sup>. I have challenged the

sender of the letter that stirred up this misdirected protest to come before our committee and back up his claims or apologize.

He failed to show up for the hearing. You can draw your own conclusions.

We are going to work out a bill that I am sure will be satisfactory to the poultry industry, and protect consumers at the same time.

February 28, 1957



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)