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ADDRESS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WHEAT GROWERS  
TOPEKA, KANSAS, DECEMBER 9, 1959.

Wheat Production - Burden or Opportunity?

I am happy and privileged to have this opportunity to meet with the wheatgrowers of this country.

I have a great respect for this organization and its officers and membership. Responsible groups such as this make a real contribution to our entire economy.

I also wish to congratulate your sister organization, the Great Plains Wheat Market Development Association, on the important and effective job it is carrying out with funds derived from the wheatgrowers themselves.

My old friend, Cliff Hope, wrote to me that he <sup>could</sup> ~~would~~ not be with us today as he is traveling in Europe and the Far East in the interests of the Market Development Association. I am sure that his wise counsel and advice will be missed at this meeting, just as they are missed in Washington. I have always had the highest regard for Cliff Hope. In my heart I am certain that if in 1953

he had been appointed Secretary of Agriculture, farmers would not be faced with the disastrously low prices and low income of 1959. It was a sad day when the Republican party repudiated the principles and policies of Cliff Hope, the Republican elder statesman of agriculture.

1959 has not been a good year for farmers. Net farm income has dropped about 15 percent below a year ago, and it was nothing to brag about then. The parity ratio now stands at 77, the lowest point in 20 years.

I wish I could say that farmers had hit the bottom of this decline.

But I cannot. Last month agricultural economists from all over the United States met in Washington with the specialists in the Department of Agriculture. They dusted off the crystal ball and foretold that next year will be even worse for farmers. Prices received will be still lower. Production costs will increase. This is the famous cost-price squeeze.

In the coming year, wheat farmers will also be faced with the hazard of new legislative battles that will vitally affect their future.

On the one hand they must fight off the planned attack to "free" them from the only protection they have -- allotments and quotas -- by pushing them

into an all-out production race.

On the other hand, they must combine their forces in support of a counter-proposal that is positive enough to substantially improve their income, and at the same time assure the general public that the fears aroused by inflammatory publicity regarding wheat production are unnecessary.

All of you are familiar with the background of the wheat legislation passed by Congress last year. The executive proposals were simply not acceptable to Congress or to the wheatgrowers. They were "either/or" proposals. Either increase the wheat allotment by 50 percent -- which would have opened up to planting more acres than were harvested in the high year of 1949 -- and let the Secretary name any support price he wanted; or take extremely sharp cuts in acreage allotments and very severe penalties -- at no increase in support price.

I want to congratulate the National Wheatgrowers Association for the cooperative stand you took during those troubled weeks when wheat legislation was under discussion. I am familiar with the wheat stabilization program which this organization backs. This is a reasonable and carefully worked out program. It is based on a national marketing quota of bushels, instead of acreage allotments, which seem to me the most realistic approach to this matter.

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However, you are all aware of the obstacles that confront this program when it comes before Congress. The action of the House of Representatives in 1958 is still vivid in your memories.

One of the difficulties in handling the wheat legislation this year was the initial lack of agreement between the various organizations and groups interested. When a bill was finally passed, asking wheat farmers to reduce their planted acres drastically in return for a higher support price, your organization supported the proposal as the most practical solution possible, although not the most preferable. This bill, which would have cut back wheat production and prevented further growth of CCC-owned stocks, was vetoed because it raised the support price.

*I believe it would have helped producers and the taxpayers.*

In these past few months, it has become apparent that there is a growing unity among farm groups, both general organizations and commodity groups. The National Wheatgrowers Association has exhibited real leadership in helping to bring this about.

*Increasing Unity*

Let me tell you this. In the months ahead farmers are going to need all of the cooperation and unity they can get among themselves and their leaders. We have had a forewarning in the five-point program for farm legislation recently

proposed by the Republican leadership.

Three of the first four points of this so-called "new" farm program  
are simply restatements of existing programs. The fourth pledges support  
for a "food for peace" program. I hope with all my heart that this is sincere  
 and that in this coming year <sup>of 1960</sup> there will be Republican support for my Food for  
 Peace efforts, which in this year <sup>past</sup> ~~just past~~ <sup>the Administration</sup> they strongly opposed.

↳ The heart of the GOP proposal is the fifth point concerning wheat. #5

In essence, it is proposed to do for wheat what was done for corn this year -- no  
allotments, no quotas, no restrictions, no penalties. Just unlimited production  
at a low support price.

We need only to look at the 4.4 billion bushel corn harvest to know  
what could happen to wheat. While public attention has been directed toward  
wheat, feed grain supplies have been increasing every year at an average of  
nearly 7 million tons. As prices were forced down, production was forced up in  
answer. So now we have more than 235 million tons of cheap feed grains on hand,  
around 80 million tons more than there is immediate use for. And this record  
supply of cheap feed is leading the livestock economy right down that sliding  
scale. Hogs and poultry and beef cattle are in trouble, and more trouble is on  
 the way.

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I know that wheatgrowers do not want to be caught in this net of higher production and lower prices.

And I know, too, that they want to take constructive action that will permit them to produce for use at a fair price.

Yet in all candor, I must warn you that the cards are still stacked against you in Washington. we ~~you~~ face an uphill task.

Perhaps you can't achieve all you desire in the way of improved wheat legislation during the coming year, in view of the existing smog of misunderstanding and misdirection in Washington.

↳ But you can make progress toward restoring your own voice to more effectiveness in the nation's capitol, and you can pave the way for eventually getting an effective wheat stabilization program.

↳ There is a practical legislative avenue offering you that opportunity.

↳ I'm referring to the bill which I introduced late in the recent session, known as the Family Farm Program Development Bill. While designed to seek new and better approaches for agriculture generally, it appears to be a useful vehicle through which wheat producers could work out their own program. If we work together, we can at least get the machinery established now for more specific

Objectives

steps after 1960's political climate has subsided.

The legislation I have introduced is designed as a vehicle to permit producers themselves to participate in developing a new and better farm program which will accomplish four major objectives:

1. Improve farm prices and family farm income;
2. Assure ample supplies of food and fiber for all domestic needs, for commercial exports, for a national safety reserve, and for use by our government in building world peace;
3. Reduce the tax burden through lower farm program costs;
4. Protect the well-being of future generations by conserving soil and water resources now wasted in unneeded production.

Through this bill, an over-all farm program can be developed that will establish a new concept of parity -- a concept of fair price -- based upon farm earnings comparable to current earnings of other groups.

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Under this proposal farm producers will be permitted a major voice in choosing the most suitable program method for balancing market supply with demand.

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↳ This bill gives a new freedom to producers of a commodity when production becomes so high that the market price falls below the price determined to be fair to producers. This is the freedom to elect their own representatives to work directly with the Secretary of Agriculture and design a national marketing quota program which they consider appropriate and desirable. Such a program would then be submitted to the growers in a democratic referendum. If approved by two-thirds of those voting, it would come to Congress. Congress would study the program to insure that the bill was in the interest of the public welfare -- that it contained needed consumer safeguards. If Congress did not disapprove the program by resolution within 60 days, it would go into operation.

↳ The Family Farm Program Development Act would open the door to new programs tailored to the exact needs of individual commodities. It would open the door to the adoption of the Wheat Stabilization Program.

↳ There are no restrictions on the methods that could be used in formulating the national marketing quota program. The whole tool-kit of income stabilization programs is provided -- crop loans, marketing premium payments, marketing agreements, marketing orders, surplus diversion payments, purchase agreements, export incentive

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payments, export equalization payments, stabilization pools, income deficiency or compensatory payments direct to farmers. Or combinations of these. Or other methods. The method producers believe best adapted to achieve fair price objectives could be selected.

The bill also provides for a long-range agricultural resources conservation program. I look upon unused, unusable production as the living evidence of waste -- waste of soil and of water -- waste of human energy -- waste of all of the costly items needed to produce the quantity for which there is no need. Therefore, a program of conservation, including incentives to encourage land-use adjustment and temporary retirement of land not needed for production, is an essential to a comprehensive farm production and use program such as this.

∟ The Humphrey Family Farm Program Development bill also takes into account the low production, low income farms which pose a special problem in agriculture. Many of these units could be transformed into fully adequate commercial family farms if proper credit facilities were available. The bill proposes an expanded supervised credit program, with farm and home management guidance. For those persons who wish to leave the land, but are not prepared to take up life in urban

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areas, vocational and employment guidance and assistance would be available.

Under this bill, we would determine for the first time the exact level of need for food and fiber here in this country. Our production potential would be used to supply both the market needs and the needs of those less fortunate among us -- the aged, the dependent children, the handicapped, the blind. The national school lunch program and the special milk program for children would be expanded so that all children would share in our abundance.

A national security reserve of food and fiber products designed to protect the people of the United States against shortages in the event of war or other national emergency would be established.

*Pop. growth*

This proposal lays the ground-work for an international food and fiber program by determining the true world need for food and fiber and the manner in which the United States may best supply our share of that need.

FOOD FOR PEACE

I hope that in your deliberations at this convention, you will give some attention to the Family Farm Program Development bill. I hope you will study it in terms of what it could mean to you as wheatgrowers. But I also hope that you will consider it from the wider point of view as responsible citizens of a responsible nation -- a nation blessed with existing and potential wealth -- a nation with an opportunity to bring into reality the world's vision of peace.

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Our opportunities are many and great. We consider the stocks of wheat held by Commodity Credit Corporation as a problem. This is because they are permitted to hang like a dead-weight over your heads.

↳ We have taken a negative approach in this matter long enough. I believe that the whole country is being scared by a bogey-man -- a bogey-man called "over-production" and "surplus."

↳ Let's look at some figures. There is nothing like a little factual sunlight and fresh air to clear out a haunted house.

↳ How much wheat do we use in this country each year? Around 625 million bushels.

How much do we export annually? In 1959, we exported 410 million bushels.

How much did we produce in 1959? 1 billion 117 million bushels, 82 million bushels more than there was immediate and apparent use for.

↳ Is this an amount great enough to panic wheat growers out of an honest straight-forward attempt to bring some reason and stability to their production? Are efficiency and productivity attributes to be ashamed of? The only shame in this situation is that we have not had sufficient political wisdom to see our abundant production as a ray of hope in a dark world.

What do you think Krushchev would do if his country could produce enough wheat to feed the people of the soviet and still have bins running over? The Soviet system has been successful in sending a rocket to the moon, but it has not been successful in providing its people sufficient bread or a decent standard of living. The people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America certainly look with more longing at our supplies of food than at the Soviet supply of rockets.

We can truthfully say that we have enough wheat to feed our people and still have enough to put a loaf of bread on the table of every hungry family in the world. We don't have an overpowering surplus. We have 60 <sup>bill</sup> million loaves of bread. Let's find the way to put that bread into the hands of hungry people.

Let's load enough wheat to feed 500,000 people onto a great White Fleet -- a fleet of mercy ships embarked on peaceful missions, equipped to render prompt and vigorous assistance in natural disasters.

Once before, a fleet of American ships in peacetime dramatically signaled a turning point in American history. President Theodore Roosevelt sent the first White Fleet on a 3-year, round-the-world voyage as a demonstration of the emergence of the United States as world power. It was a visible, tangible, and extraordinarily effective device.

So, too, a new White Fleet, sent forth to the coasts of Asia and Africa and South America, could dramatize the America of mid-20th century as it brings American help to the disaster-stricken, and American knowledge and teaching to the emerging people as a symbol of American good will, friendship, and maturity.

I want to suggest that in this coming session Congress should by formal resolution, proclaim that the government-owned stocks of agricultural commodities are to be held as an international food and fiber reserve. Instead of being called a surplus, they shall instead be a guarantee against famine in the world. They would also be a guarantee against unscrupulous speculation in the food markets of the world at the expense of the hungry.

Wheat, and the other foods this country produces in abundance, should be used in this way as a positive force for good. Wheat has always been the symbol of good, the symbol of hope for the future. Bread for centuries has been the staff of life. For centuries people all over the world have prayed: "Give us this day our daily bread." America can help answer this prayer.

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NATION MUST AWAKEN TO CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP, HUMPHREY SAYS

Fate of the free world may hinge upon America's "awakening to the responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities of leadership", Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, (D. Minn.) told a Democratic rally last night in Wichita, Kansas.

"The total default of Presidential leadership is the greatest corrupting influence in our nation today," he declared.

"Simply to mean well is not good enough in the affairs of great nations, nor is it good enough these days for a great nation merely to wait for events to happen, and then to react to them. A great nation must march at the head of events, and by measure born of foresight, produce the events it wants."

Senator Humphrey said the Democratic party has "absorbed the lesson of history" that a great nation can produce the events it wants.

"That is why it is the oldest political party, with the longest unbroken history of any political party in the world today. For the same reason, that is why it is an eternally young party, supercharged with eagerness to release the giant powers of America for greatness in building here at home and abroad. That is why our party at critical moments in American history has raised from its midst the Presidential leadership that has sounded the call to action--stations the nation was waiting to hear."

"Why have we come to live with a bad taste in our mouth--with a sense that despite our material comforts, we have no inner joy? Why do we live

with fear in our eyes? Why do we live with shame in our hearts -- with the sense that because of some self-inflicted wound, we have fallen from the heights we once occupied?

"This bad taste, this fear, this shame, all have a common cause. The cause, dating from 1953, is the infectious disease of apathy and indifference caught from a breakdown in leadership at the very summit of the nation."

For the Democratic Party to win in 1960, it should gear its efforts to "three great goals confronting America," Senator Humphrey declared. He listed these goals as:

- 1... "the winning of an honorable and lasting peace;
- 2... "the fulfillment of our economic potential;"
- 3... "and the attainment of full dignity and liberty

for every American."

Calling for the Democratic Party to be the "party of vision, the party of faith, the party of ideas," Senator Humphrey declared:

"At this mid-point in the 20th century, mankind is again moving into an untraveled world. New problems, new danger, new uncertainties, confront us.

"But the new world into which we are moving is also gleaming with high promise. The free peoples of the world are infinitely stronger than they were in the nineteenth century. We have gained in knowledge of the physical world, in science and technology and communication. Above all, we have come to appreciate the links which bind all free peoples together. We have found the instruments of cooperation which may forge these loose links into an unbreakable chain of strength.

"So let us lead from strength. Instead of thinking that every great task is beyond our means, let us measure the greatness of our capacity.

"Instead of filling the air with fear, let us fill men's hearts with hope.

"Instead of being overwhelmed by the dangers of the world, let us be inspired by the challenge to surmount these dangers.

"Instead of worrying about the future, let us labor to create it."



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