

Dec. 12, 1960

Sp file: BTA Meeting -
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DEAN Bill Thatcher of Coop

Secy Ag. National

G.T.A.
St. Paul
12/12/60

This, to me, is an exciting and inspiring occasion.

It should be to all of you. I know it is to my great and good friend, your own M. W. "Bill" Thatcher, truly the dean of effective co-op leadership for America's family farmers.

It has always been a thrilling experience to participate in this great gathering, the annual banquet of the Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association--without doubt one of America's greatest co-operative institutions.

For each of the last seven years, I have had the privilege--and honor--of addressing this greatest of all assemblages of farmers from throughout the heartland of the Midwest.

off to you!
me!

No man could ask for a greater tribute of confidence.

Now, for the eighth consecutive time, I again have that honor--and it is an occasion of tremendous satisfaction.

We have had eight "lean years" in the common cause which we share--the fight for social and economic justice for family farmers of America.

Had 8
Lean years!

At long last, we now have common cause to celebrate.

We are, I am convinced, on the threshold of New Frontiers for American agriculture.

New
Frontiers
for
Ag.

And you in GTA can rightly claim a great deal of credit for making a new era of progress possible. You never weakened in your convictions, you never faltered in your determination. You paved the way, for the opportunities we now face.

GTA Progress!

Thanks for Support! -2-

If my friends from neighboring states will indulge me, I would like at the outset of these remarks to express my heartfelt gratitude to the farm people of my own state of Minnesota--particularly to those within your great cooperative family--for their tremendous personal vote of confidence that has sent me back to the United States Senate for another six years.

Senate

Kennedy

And I want to thank you, too, for electing a President of the United States who will no longer block, by veto, my efforts in your behalf.

President

I am humbly grateful for your continued friendship, your faith, your trust, and your most effective support.

And I want every one of you to know that I am deeply conscious of the responsibility that trust and confidence imposes upon me, as your chosen spokesman. Your fight is my fight, because it is a just fight. It always has been, and it always will be. Your problems are my problems--just as are the problems of all my constituents, in every walk of life, regardless of partisanship.

Trust
+
Respons

By the same token, I share your pride in your own progress and accomplishments--just as I take pride in all progress for Minnesota and the Upper Midwest.

It is in that spirit that I want to commend and congratulate you tonight, at this 23rd annual banquet, on your own growth and expansion in the past year--on your own efforts to help farmers help themselves, through cooperative action and efficient management of your cooperative enterprises.

23rd
Annual
Banquet

Congrats

← (Andreas next)

In recent years, observers of farm policy trends have been concerned about the implications of vertical integration in agriculture--and its effect upon family farmers. You have helped provide the answer, through asserting aggressive and far-seeing leadership toward farmer-owned, farmer-operated vertical integration of your own.

ANDREAS

I commend you upon adding processing to your network of enterprises, for the benefit of the Midwest's growing number of soybean producers. I commend you for broadening your sights of international marketing. Your horizons now truly extend from Windom to Karachi, from Mankato to ~~Madrid~~ *Madrid* - a real New Frontier for American agriculture.

St Paul - to Africa

And I commend you, too, for adding to your official family an enlightened and socially-conscious businessman in your new executive vice president, Dwayne O. Andreas. I am proud to count both your great general manager, Bill Thatcher, and Dwayne Andreas, as personal friends and advisors--and prouder still to have such a great team of brains, experience, and vitality working shoulder to shoulder together for Midwest agriculture.

Andreas

I am confident that GTA as an institution, and the vast array of family farmers you serve in the Upper Midwest, will both benefit greatly by this new leadership alliance in GTA.

We have much to be thankful for tonight.

We are, and have a right to be, jubilant over a victory at the polls, that we believe will open new opportunities for American agriculture.

Yet we must be conscious of the sobering responsibility that always comes with victory.

The problems that have concerned us are now ours to solve. They are not easy problems to solve. Yet we who have asked for your trust and support have the obligation to move ahead toward solving them.

Victory has brought a challenge, as well as an opportunity--and we must now prepare to accept both.

Challenge
or
opportunity!

Two years ago, at another occasion in Minnesota just before your annual meeting, I advised my fellow Democrats that it wasn't enough to merely seek to win--we must seek to win for a purpose, and must be prepared to fulfill that purpose.

In my own way, I have endeavored to impress that message upon my political party throughout the past ~~two~~ years--to assist in creating the climate that brought forth the most constructive farm platform of any political party in American history.

We cannot, and shall not, break faith with our promises. We must move aggressively toward fulfillment of that platform.

It was indeed heartening to hear the message read to you tonight from the President-elect of the United States.

Kennedy
message

Kennedy
message

In both 1952 and 1956, you heard promises before the election.

In neither year did you receive such a message of reassurance after the election.

It has been my privilege to talk personally with the President-elect since the election. I can add my own assurance that he intends keeping his word to farm people of our nation, and is deeply conscious of needing--and wanting--the guidance and counsel of Midwest farm leaders in accomplishing the objective.

Kennedy

I've talked to Kennedy

He'll keep his word.

It would be wrong to tell you that all of your complex economic problems will be resolved overnight as a result of the election.

no quick solution

But it is not wrong to tell you that there will be a new spirit, a new attitude, a new philosophy, and a new determination in the highest counsels of this government to improve economic conditions for rural people of our nation.

I speak to you tonight as an individual United States Senator. It would be improper for me to attempt to outline the course of action ahead.

We as a nation have chosen new leadership, and we must await the considered judgments and recommendations of the people in whom we have bestowed our trust.

my Guidelines!

There are broad guidelines, however, which I intend recommending to the President-elect, and I believe it is proper that I share them with you. These ten steps must be given high priority:

10 Steps!

1. There must be early, positive, action towards raising farm income. Every authority now existing must be explored and used for this purpose.

2. There should be undertaken an immediate inventory of the nation's real potential needs for food and fiber, for now and for the future. It may require, and should call for, an executive order from the President of the United States to all his Departments to obtain this long-needed government-wide appraisal of needs and uses for our agricultural abundance.

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3. There should be developed a world food budget for the next five, ten, and twenty years, as the basis for determining the extent of the United State's participation in fulfilling, along with other major producing nations, the world's requirements.

Plan!

4. There should be called a nation-wide Food and Fiber Conference, perhaps a White House Conference, to explore fully the vital role of agriculture in our nation's total economy and in our national purposes of the decade ahead.

National Food & Fiber Conf.

5. There must be immediate steps to assure farm people themselves a greater farmer-voice and farmer-participation in both development and administration of farm programs.

Farm Voice

6. There must be a new recognition of agriculture's responsibility toward wiping out mistreatment and exploitation of migratory farm labor, both from the standpoint of decency and human justice as well as to protect family farmers from the competition of cheap labor obtained at the expense of human dignity.

Incorporated Agric

Migratory Labor

7. There should be undertaken a thorough review of existing farm credit services, with the aim of assuring improved availability of financing at more reasonable rates of interest.

Credit

Interest

8. There should be stepped up emphasis upon conservation on the land and watershed development, to preserve and improve our soil, water, timber, and wildlife resources for protection of generations yet unborn.

Conservation

9. There should be greater concentration of research into new uses and new outlets for farm products, without sacrificing the always-important basic research without which American agriculture could never have achieved its great productive efficiency.

Research

10. And, above all else, there must be undertaken immediately, by a sympathetic Secretary of Agriculture, a public relations campaign in the best sense of the term to better tell the farmer's side of the story to the rest of the American public- to stimulate better consumer understanding of the farmer's role, and problems, in assuring the nation of an adequate food supply.

Public Relations for Agri

These are all steps that can be started without delay, steps toward opening the doors to New Frontiers for American agriculture.

Let me comment in more detail on a few of them.

Higher farm income must become the first, and major objective of new agricultural policy.

Higher Farm Income!

The new Administration must make it clear that this is its objective. Efforts in this direction need not, indeed, must not, wait entirely on new legislation; nor should farm people be misled into thinking any one legislative measure can be a cure-all for income problems.

No need to wait!

A great deal can be done by administrative action alone, and it must be done immediately. We must breakaway from the fetters of the past, and prove that a new attitude and new determination can produce new--and better--results, even with the laws now on the books. New and improved legislation will be forthcoming, in due time--but the interval must not be wasted.

Administrative Action!

If I may depart, for a moment, from my basic approach of what can be done without new legislation, let me at least add my hope that the new administration will welcome, and carefully consider, new concepts to legislation, as well as reconsider many constructive ideas that have never had the opportunity to be tried.

New Concepts

new frontiers!!

Our eyes must never be closed, if we are looking for New Frontiers. Let's make sure we don't wear the same blinders that obstructed the Republican Administration from daring to try anything new.

marketing order

In that realm of new possibilities, I foresee greater consideration towards how the marketing order principle, so successful in limited application to specialty crops in a specific area, may be developed into broader application on a regional or nationwide basis. A good deal of constructive thought has already gone into such an approach for poultry and dairy products. I venture to suggest tonight that it should also be given more consideration in relation to many of our Midwest cash grain crops. If interest is shown by groups such as yours, I have no doubt but that it will be given the consideration it deserves. It might offer possibilities of increased bargaining power that farm marketing cooperatives urgently need, with less drain on the public treasury.

Bargaining Powers

However, neither the President-elect nor Congress can formulate and legislate farm policy in a vacuum. It must be related to the total economic climate of our country, and to our total national purposes. It is for this reason we urgently need the inventory of potential food and fiber needs I have suggested.

Inventory

Such an inventory must include far more than only the potential of normal dollar-market demand.

Rather, it must include, for example, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's appraisal of human need existing within our own country for decent nutritional standards.

Defense

It must include the Defense Department's estimates of need for our own armed forces, and for our allies, in event of any international emergency--as a form of military support just as essential as guns and tanks.

It must include the Department of State's re-appraised estimates of need as a potential tool for strengthening the forces of freedom in the world, and for girding ourselves against the possible challenge of the Soviet Union using food supplies as a political weapon to win control of uncommitted weapons.

For Policy

Food and fiber can not only finance needed economic development in the world. The availability of it, or the lack of that availability, may mean the stability or the fall of new governments in many lands.

Because I feel it is too urgent to wait for a change of Administrations, I am asking our State Department this week to seek, through the United Nations, an appraisal of the future food needs in the embroiled Congo. We may well find that food can help achieve the stability that guns have failed to do.

Now

Africa

The inventory I propose must also include a realistic estimate from the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, as to the stockpile needs to protect consumers of the nation in event of attack. And it must include the Department of Agriculture's own appraisal of not only reserves needed for our growing nation's protection against natural hazards of drought and crop failure, but also, of the potential toward expanding areas of new consumption throughout the world.

Strategic Reserves

No where in government, now, is this total picture of potential requirements available. Someone must look at our needs in totality, instead of piecemeal.

It would certainly appear in the entire nation's interests, not in the interest of farmers alone, to have this inventory of potential need available for Congress. We need such information before trying to blindly proceed with legislation making whatever production adjustments may be required to achieve price and income stability in agriculture. Farmers have indicated their willingness to accept such adjustments, in return for fair income. However, they and the nation are entitled to know-- and need to know--the true extent to which such adjustments are, or will be necessary.

Closely related to our national inventory of need must be the world-wide appraisal I have suggested. We should not undertake this alone. We should undertake it through increased support for, and participation in, the Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations.

World
needs

Over a year ago, the FAO embarked upon a five-year Freedom from Hunger campaign. It asked each member nation to designate cooperating Freedom from Hunger committees, including church leaders, farm leaders, and a general broad cross-section representing all groups dedicated to wiping out hunger and misery in the world.

Freedom
From
Hunger

It is to our national shame that we have not acted. A year has gone by, and our government has not moved. Other countries have designed Freedom from Hunger committees, and they are at work. The United States of America, with its vast abundance of food and fiber and its store-house of know-how for producing it,

has failed to comply with the request from FAO that we participate formally in the world-wide Freedom from Hunger campaign.

It is my hope that President-elect Kennedy will not wait, in this instance. It is my hope that he will shortly designate a special Food for Peace Administrator, and assign him, among other responsibilities, the immediate task of selecting a nationwide Freedom from Hunger Committee of responsible American leaders to cooperate fully with the FAO's efforts for the next four years. President-elect Kennedy has set a precedent for such a move now by his appointment of a study commission on economically distressed areas, already at work.

FOOD
ADMINISTR

If such action is taken soon, it could be our Christmas Gift of hope to hungry people of the world. (DAILY Bread)

For the next decade, the fate of all Americans hinges upon our success or failure in achieving a just and lasting peace in the world.

It is obvious our President-elect is deeply aware of the real challenge of our times, and will dedicate his greatest energies and efforts toward fulfillment of our common hopes and aspirations for achieving that peace out of the chaos in the world today.

In such times, to even attempt to consider farm policy as an isolated domestic issue is the height of impracticality.

We must face up to the times in which we live, and the world in which we live.

If our greatest challenge is the survival of Freedom in the world--and it is, then farm people must turn their thinking to the way in which they can make their greatest contribution toward entire our/national purpose.

FOOD an ASSET - GOD GIVEN LIFE

There must be an awakening in the rest of the nation, also, to the tremendous asset America's farmers are providing for the arsenal of freedom.

And to the extent that we fully utilize America's productive resources to win the battle for freedom, whether on the farms of the Midwest or the factories of our great cities, then the entire nation indeed must and will accept economic protection of producers as in the national interest, in the interest of freedom, and in the interest of humanity.

Alone, you in agriculture are a minority--a dwindling minority.

But to the extent you gear your thinking to your own role in the struggle for freedom in the world, you are no longer alone, nor a minority. You are a vital cog, an extremely vital cog, in the totality of our national purpose--and deserving of full acceptance as such by the nation as a whole.

This broader purpose, therefore, must remain paramount in New Frontiers of farm policy thinking during the challenging years ahead.



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