

Excerpts of Remarks

Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey

National Federation of Grain Cooperatives

Washington, D. C. - April 7, 1965

Today we are engaged in a war against the deadliest enemy of all. That enemy is poverty. It affects 35 million Americans who do not have sufficient food, shelter or clothing. And it affects one out of every three farm families.

This is a war we are going to win. But to win it we will need your help. Government alone cannot solve the problem. This must be a joint effort of government, private industry and free labor.

Poverty is a drag on our economy. As rich as we are we cannot afford the waste of slums, rising

welfare costs, crime, disease and vice that are its by-products. Business cannot prosper in a society at war with itself. And your businesses, in particular, cannot continue to prosper as long as half the poverty of our country is concentrated among the 30 per cent of our people who reside in rural America.

Your businesses, too, are affected by the migration of rural people to urban areas. Too many rural communities are becoming ghost towns. When the farmer-customers leave, business must follow. No matter how efficient you are in your business, someone must buy your merchandise in order for you to make a profit.

It is in your own interest to enlist in the War Against Poverty. Look at your communities and learn the facts. You are leaders. This is your opportunity

to serve your fellow man and yourselves. Don't forget that in the winning of that war you are going to increase your own business volume.

About 36 per cent of farm families have net incomes below \$2,000. The poor are not good customers. If the incomes of these families were brought up to the \$3,000 level, there would be a dramatic increase in food consumption. And if we were to raise the incomes of persons in the rural labor force to national levels, it would generate more than \$8 billion in increased buying power. Think of that!

In the all-out attack on rural poverty we must enlist the farm cooperatives. Furthermore, any program designed to help farm families should encourage and promote the development of cooperatives.

Competing alone, small farming units are under-productive. They have a high unit cost of production.

Smaller farms cannot compete successfully with mechanization. Without available credit farmers cannot afford the high cost of modern equipment. In areas such as this the farm cooperative principle should be expanded.

Fundamentally, yours is a growth industry.

The rate of its future growth can be stimulated by the degree of civic responsibility which you assume.

Just think of the advantages of a healthier, more prosperous community and nation. Think of the advantages not only to the incomes of our farm people, but the volume of business of your cooperative. This is a long-range investment opportunity with tax free

capital gains.

The farmer has served the consuming public of America well. Most Americans are the best fed people in the world. And they pay less for their food in per cent of their salaries than do any other people in the world.

But cheap food and cheap fiber to the factories and consumers must ultimately be paid for by the poverty of the rural population. And those who own farms and who work on them deserve better of their fellow Americans. A fair price for the farmer's and farm worker's labor must continue to be our prime objective.

# INFORMATION

FROM THE  
PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE  
-ON-  
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY  
Washington 25, D. C.

AS DELIVERED BY VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF GRAIN COOPERATIVE  
WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 7, 1965

Today we are engaged in a war against the deadliest enemy of all. That enemy is poverty. It affects 35 million Americans who do not have sufficient food, shelter or clothing. And it affects one out of every three farm families.

This is a war we are going to win. But to win we will need your help. Government alone cannot solve the problem. This must be a joint effort of government, private industry and free labor.

Poverty is a drag on our economy. We cannot afford the waste of slums ... rising welfare costs ... crime ... disease and vice that are its by-products. Business cannot prosper in a society at war with itself. And your businesses, in particular, cannot continue to prosper as long as half the poverty of our country is concentrated among the 30 per cent of our people who reside in rural America.

Your businesses, too, are affected by the migration of rural people to urban areas. Too many rural communities are becoming ghost towns. When the farmer-customers leave, business must follow. No matter how efficient you are in your business, someone must buy your merchandise in order for you to make a profit.

It is in your own interest to enlist in the War Against Poverty. Look at your communities and learn the facts. You are leaders. This is your opportunity to serve your fellow man and yourselves.

About 36 per cent of farm families have net incomes below 2,000 dollars. The poor are not good customers. If the incomes of these families were brought up to the 3,000-dollar level, there would be a dramatic increase in food consumption. And if we were to raise the incomes of persons in the rural labor forces to national levels, it would generate more than 8 billion dollars in increased buying power:

In the all-out attack on rural poverty we must enlist the farm cooperatives.

Competing alone, small farming units are under-productive. They have a high unit cost of production. Smaller farms cannot compete successfully with mechanization. Without available credit farmers cannot afford the high cost of modern equipment. In areas such as this the farm cooperative principle should be expanded.

Fundamentally, yours is a growth industry. The rate of its future growth can be stimulated by the degree of civic responsibility which you assume.

Just think of the advantages of a healthier, more prosperous community and nation. Think of the advantages not only to the incomes of our farm people, but to the volume of business of your cooperative. This is a long-range investment opportunity with tax free capital gains.

The farmer has served the consuming public of America well. We are the best fed people in the world. And we pay less for our food in per cent of our salaries than do any other people in the world.

But cheap food and cheap fiber to the factories and consumers in some cases are paid for by the poverty of the rural population. And those who own farms and who work on them deserve better of their fellow Americans. We seek fair prices for factory and consumer. We also seek fair prices for the farmer's and farm worker's labor.

Today we must fight poverty wherever it exists -- in city or in countryside. It is in our economic interest.

But beyond the economic good, there is the morality of our efforts.

We in America have always drawn strength from our belief that democracy can give the greatest reward of all: the opportunity for each man and woman to make something better of himself, in his own way. We believe in the dignity and the worth of every man -- not just our society as a whole, but each man in it.

That is why we educate a child ... or give a hand to those without jobs or hope ... or do the things we must do to insure that each American, whatever his color or national origin, shall have his equal chance.

We must do here at home the responsible tasks of freemen if we as Americans are to live up to our beliefs. I ask your support and your work for the programs which will make these things possible.



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