

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

NATIONAL CORN-PICKING CONTEST

ADRIAN, MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 22, 1965

It is good to be back among old friends.

Annually, this event dramatizes the importance of safety in an era of agricultural mechanization.

Also, in a very real sense, this occasion symbolizes the miracle of abundance created from the productive genius of all American farmers.

It also symbolizes the tremendous capacity for cooperation of the many people who make this abundance possible.

The nation is proud of you. We are grateful -- and so are millions of people throughout the world who survive today only because of your efforts and deep concern.

But the contributions of American farm families, and those who serve them, have too often gone unrecognized and inadequately rewarded.

Rarely has the American farm family ever earned an income equal to that of a family in the city.

As a result, far too many families living in rural America have been deprived of parity of education, of medical care, of housing, of basic community facilities, and many of the other essentials so necessary to the good life.

It is one of the ironies of our time that despite the incredible efficiency of our farmers, rural America has fallen behind when the rest of the nation has moved ahead to new heights of prosperity and opportunity.

From the beginning of this Administration, it has been the firm conviction of our President that parity of opportunity and income should be restored to farmers and the people of rural America.

I share that conviction.

And so do the majority of members of the past two Congresses.

Together, we have taken many bold but thoughtful steps on many fronts . And the record will show we have made great and lasting progress.

High on our priority list was the problem of farm income and how to successfully live with our abundance.

This, as you know, is not an easy or simple problem. It has been a problem that has plagued agriculture and the best brains in the nation for more than 30 years. It has been a problem that many people despaired of ever solving.

When the Congress passed this past session the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 it was a major fulfillment of President Johnson's firm request of last February when he said: "Our programs should provide efficient family farmers an opportunity to earn parity of income."

Few people yet realize the enormous significance of this legislation -- of what the President and the Congress have achieved.

No one contends that this legislation is the be-all and end-all of our farm problems.

But it does represent a major break-through toward better farm income, more judicious use of our land resources, maximum use of our marketing systems both at home and abroad, and assures continued abundance for all our people.

It will accelerate the progress we have made since 1960 in raising net farm income -- income that is 1.8 billion dollars more today than it was five years ago. For the average farmer today, this means that his realized net income is nearly 1,000 dollars -- or a third higher than it was in 1960.

I have great confidence in the success of this legislation. It reflects the best judgment of Congress out of 30 years of experience with farm programs. It incorporates the best of proven programs with new features and refinements added.

For example: Experience with the feed grain program and the wheat programs since 1961 has taught us that direct payments to the farmer who voluntarily reduces

his production can strengthen farm income . . . help eliminate surpluses . . . and maintain a working balance between production and use to enable the marketplace at home and abroad to function efficiently.

Further -- and this is very important -- our legislation will establish this kind of program over a four-year period for most basic commodities -- thus eliminating the uncertainty and confusion which former farm programs imposed on farmers and prevented them from making long-range operating plans.

The feed grain program will assure annual income for more than 2 million feed grain farmers that will be some 2 billion dollars per year above the 1961 level.

It will permit further orderly reductions in surplus feed grain stocks which already are more than 30 million tons below the record high of 83 million tons at the end of the 1960 marketing year, and will reduce the Commodity Credit Corporation investment which was 3.4 billion dollars in 1960, and now is only 2 billion dollars.

The feed grain program has proved to be the best stabilizer ever devised for the livestock and poultry industry. Livestock men need no longer gamble from year to year as to the price of feed. They now can make long-term plans.

One of the most important sections of this bill is the Cropland Adjustment Program. We have learned the wisdom in recent years of diverting land not needed at the present to new uses or to conservation purposes.

The Cropland Adjustment Program will provide land adjustment contracts for as long as 10 years. By the end of four years, it is hoped that around 40 million acres will be under contract, with proper safeguards that no single county or area will be decimated of its farms, thus endangering the economy of that area through loss of farm purchasing power.

These contracts will be less costly and will enable the farmer to make his plans on a long-range basis. In addition, the program will make land more readily available for new uses, particularly for outdoor recreation and beautification. Already, conservation, wildlife and recreation groups are discussing with State and Federal officials on how best to administer the program to serve this multiple purpose.

The new legislation also recognizes that the marketplace is the best mechanism to determine the flow and pace of commercial agriculture. Most farm products will no longer move in domestic and world markets at artificially high prices. Instead they will be guided by the conditions of supply and demand. At the same time the farmer will be protected from depressed incomes by the payments he receives in return for his cooperation in diverting acres to uses other than usual crop production.

I have been closely associated and concerned with the problems of agriculture most of my life. I spent many years in the Senate dealing directly with them.

In my judgment this is the soundest and most effective farm program that has ever been enacted.

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It will provide the flexibility necessary to keep pace with a dynamic and changing agriculture.

For the majority of commercial family farmers it brings closer than ever the goal of income which will enable them to remain on the land.

It will enable this nation to produce food and fiber in the quantities we need when we need it -- with increased efficiency -- and at modest costs in terms of benefits to producers, consumers and taxpayers alike.

While I am not in the business of making predictions, it takes no particular clairvoyance to foresee the benefits accruing from this program.

The American people will continue to be better fed and better clothed, at lower cost, than ever before. And this will be a remarkable achievement when you consider that today we spend less than 19 cents of our take-home dollar for food -- vastly lower than any other country in the world.

More of our people will share in our abundance and the nutritional standards of all American people will be vastly improved by such programs as the Food Stamp Program and the School Lunch and Milk programs. This is how we shall successfully use our abundance as a blessing.

The day of needless and expensive surpluses will end. The surpluses which once existed in wheat and feed grains are already nearly gone. The heavy surpluses we now have in cotton and tobacco will steadily disappear. We shall always, however, provide for reserves of food and fiber necessary for national security and emergencies.

More and more, American farmers will be called upon to supply the world markets and they will be able to because they will be competitive. Farm exports have topped 6 million dollars for the last two years -- which means that more than one out of every five acres of farm production goes into the world markets. In ten years, our exports will most certainly exceed 8 billion dollars.

American abundance will become even more critically important as the struggle for freedom around the world continues and as nation after nation outruns its capacity to feed a burgeoning population.

Today, 2 billion out of the world's 3 billion people either face imminent hunger and famine or are subsisting on barely marginal diets.

In the year 2000 -- just 35 years from now -- world population will be 6 billion. American abundance and agricultural know-how are the only hopes for many of these people for maintaining their subsistence and, then, for building productive economies of their own.

But this Administration has and will continue to move on many other fronts to put new economic muscle into rural America and create new opportunities for its people.

New education programs will close the lag that places the rural school child two years behind the urban child in educational achievements.

A new rural housing program will close the housing gap in rural America where one out of four homes should be replaced or given major repairs.

A new community facilities bill of loans and grants will revitalize some 15,000 rural towns and villages that are without water or sewer facilities -- without fire protection -- without recreation facilities.

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And President Johnson has declared war on poverty -- and that includes poverty in rural America, where half the nation's lowest income families live. And we will win that war.

Today we have a President, and a Congress, who care about people and their problems.

Today we have an American nation with faith in itself and in the future.

This is the most exciting, most dynamic -- and potentially most rewarding -- era of all our history.

We have the means, and the determination, to strive for greatness, for brotherhood, -- for lasting peace.

We will succeed.

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