

[Transcript]

Vice President's speech at the AFEA buffet-reception at the Department of State, August 22, 1966.

Introduction: May I have your attention please. We in the United States Department of Agriculture welcome you to Washington, to our native habitat. Secretary Freeman was very anxious to be with us this evening, but when he found he couldn't be with us he looked for somebody who he felt had a genuine interest in American agriculture to take his place as your host this evening. In consequence, I have the high honor of introducing to you Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice President of the United States.

Thank you. Thank you very much. I have been at, what we call in Washington, these receptions before and we have a different name for them out home in Minnesota but it is the same spirit and the same fun. And I know that this is not a night for extended speeches, but it is an evening for good fellowship and an opportunity to say to some very fine, and distinguished, and gifted people how much we appreciate your good work and how much we appreciate your visit to the Nation's Capital; and how much we appreciate the wonderful courtesy and hospitality of the University of Maryland, particularly President Elkins and all of his staff in hosting or cohosting this AFEA meeting.

Now I must tell you that when I was asked to come here this evening by my good friend Secretary Freeman, here was the description that he gave to me. I want you to know the background of this because the Humphrey family is following in the tradition of the President and that is what the Vice President is supposed to do in case any of didn't know. Luci and Pat were married a couple of weeks ago and now Donna and Bob are going to be married next Saturday--Bob being my, our son-- Mrs. Humphrey always says don't just say my son, our son--and Miss Donna, a very beautiful lady from Minnesota with a name of Erickson, which fits in very well with our habitat out there.

When I was asked to host this particular gathering for Secretary Freeman, my son and prospective daughter-in-law had not as yet set the date for the great event and I had not consulted with Mrs. Humphrey at all about these matters of receptions and gatherings in Washington, since she sort of takes off for Minnesota in the summertime to our lovely lake place out there at Waverly, Minnesota. I am telling you all of this because the program says that Mrs. Humphrey and the Vice President will be here this evening. Mrs. Humphrey is here in spirit and she is home with the family--15 members of two families in the flesh, and with 85 neighbors, and I think a little later in the spirit. I am here both in the flesh and in the spirit. Secretary Freeman told me that there are going to be a few of our friends in town, Hubert. He said Jane and I have a very important hard working engagement out in the pleasant

surroundings of the Cascades in Washington State where we want to talk to people about better farming, soil conservation, and water resources. There will be anywhere from 25 to 30 people. Would you and Muriel mind just spending a little time with them? Why, I said, Orville, I know that it is very important for you to go to the Cascades and talk to the folks about dry land farming. Very important that you should go there on those rocky slopes and talk to them about soil erosion of the good topper, and all water resources, and all those things and if you and Jane want a couple of weeks off why you go right ahead and Hubert and Muriel will stay here and slave, and slave, and slave and slave. So he took off and here I am but I am not slaving at all; I am having a wonderful time. I thought you ought to know this background.

Now I want to say to these farm economists that as a political scientist I have always had a bit of resistance to economists because economists try to pretend that they have the true faith. And we in the political science association are just sort of ecumenical. We cover everything. I was the vice president of the American Political Science Association for a period of time until they found out that they had to have standards for that office, and then I decided to become Vice President of the United States. But I want to say right now, without fear or contradiction, that the agricultural economists have outmarried themselves-- everyone that I have seen here tonight. There is no doubt about it.

I never knew that economics could be quite so charming. And I now understand why all of you are able to explain that the rise in the cost of living is not due at all to agricultural products. You have been listening to your wife explain what happened to the family budget. In some note of seriousness may I on behalf of our government and the President, and the Secretary of Agriculture, and I know that John Schnittker will speak for himself here as will others, may I just tell you how happy we are that you could be here and that you have come here for this 2½ day conference. We need your advice and your counsel. We look to you more than ever before. I believe that the time is at hand where the agricultural economist is needed in every consideration of this government's economic policy. I was in New York City for a while this afternoon. I met with business people there, people that are engaged in industry and people that are engaged in shipping, and commodities, and I can tell you that without any doubt at all, or without question, everyone knows that one of the great strengths of this American economy is the agricultural productivity of our farm people and the great competence of our agricultural sector. I had some worries and I might just as well spill them out to you in the few moments that are mine. I am convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that the food and fiber that we produce is one of the most valuable instruments or forces for seeking the kind of a world that we want. That is a world of peace, and it is a world in which mankind can at least aspire to the good life, and it is a world in which there is hope for freedom. Not only is it important that we have the abundance that

we so long complained about and now look upon with some worry lest we not have it, but it is also important that the technology which you represent, the know-how which our great land grant colleges represent, and they are here in abundance tonight, that this technology and the know-how, and the pattern of conveying this knowledge, be made available to a very hungry world.

This world is not only hungry for food, it is hungry for knowledge. And I think it is very hungry for freedom and opportunity. All of my adult life I have been interested in American agriculture and my family before me. I lay no claim to any expert knowledge but I do lay claim to what I call just intuitive understanding. I have grown up with farm people, I have lived in the areas in which the industry, and the wholesaler, and the retailer depended upon rural people. Even if that population is only 8 or 10 percent, it is the difference between greatness and weakness. It is the difference between prosperity and depression. It is the difference between strength and weakness. When I hear people say that there are fewer people on the farm than ever before, as if that were to minimize its importance, I remind them that we don't have many doctors either but we have a very fine medical profession, and we have the best of healing. We don't have many atomic scientists either, but we have the greatest knowledge of nuclear resources and nuclear power in the world today. It is not numbers that count, it is quality and excellence.

And the men and women in this room who have devoted their lives to agricultural economics, whether it be agricultural economics for production or home economics for the home and the family, have made a major contribution to the strength, and the wealth, and the power, and the goodness of this nation. And I wanted to be here tonight to tell you that. And to thank you, and to salute you and ask you to continue to give your advice and counsel.

I worry lest we become too concerned about having too much. If I have a choice between victory and defeat, having suffered one and enjoyed the other, I take victory. There is not a thing that you can do to your character in defeat that you can't do better in victory. And if I have a choice between having too little of food and fiber and too much, I don't hesitate a moment to say I would rather have it labeled on my record that we have too much. And I make a prediction here tonight that unless you bend your efforts and your advice and counsel to this government and to this economy that America is going to miss a great opportunity, because for years and years, for better than a generation, we have taught ourselves that we have too much, only not to keep up with population statistics and the rising expectations of people. And I predict we will have too little unless you make it your business to advise and counsel every man, woman and child in this nation that we need more. So get at it will you. This is more than I can do and it is more than your President can do. We need you.

I guess that is about all I wanted to say except I think you are a great group and I am delighted to see my Minnesotan friends here. I didn't see quite as many as I did from Purdue. And I might add, with equal candor, I have noticed that Cornell is here in rather large numbers too. And I did see a few of my dear friends from Ames, and when I said where are the rest of you they said we don't need many with our quality. Now I didn't subscribe to all of this, I want you to know, being a boy born in South Dakota, a graduate of the University of Minnesota, and blessed with an opportunity of education in Louisiana. And may I say in the latter days of my life . . .

I don't want to go that far. In these days of my life, to have been privileged to serve with you and for you first in the Congress and now as Vice President of the United States. On behalf of President Lyndon Johnson I welcome you, I salute you, I hope you have a great time. Good luck!



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