

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

UPON OPENING FIELD HEARINGS OF THE

RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

JULY 8, 1971

Ever since our new Rural Development Subcommittee went to work early this year, we have been concerned about national growth.

The problems facing our nation are many and difficult. People have left the countryside, pouring into the major metropolitan areas, so the rural community has become poor and the big city has become overburdened, struggling to provide adequate services while trying to keep taxes at reasonable levels.

Our people have located in increasing numbers along the Atlantic and Pacific coastal areas, the Gulf and the Great Lakes. What is needed is a balanced growth between the urban and rural areas of our country.

Both Alabama and Georgia have shown that industry can be dispersed throughout the country -- that it doesn't need to locate only around the big population centers.

The South has proved that hometown initiative with a reasonable amount of government action can turn things around, making renewed areas out of depressed areas.

Our trip this morning to Decatur was a visit to one of these success stories. During the 1930s, the 15 counties in the Tennessee River Valley were on a depressed, one crop economy. There was chronic malaria. These factors combined with a national depression didn't leave much room for hope.

Then the TVA came. But it didn't come offering to solve all of the problems of the people of Northern Alabama, but rather offering people a chance to help themselves.

The men of TVA didn't offer an industrial boom, but instead they began with a plan to conquer the malaria, and to diversify the economy of the 15 counties and they began by emphasizing the economic well-being of agriculture.

But the local people had to do the work, and this is what it is going to take. The 15 counties of the Tennessee River Valley plan together for their mutual development, because they know that together they can accomplish what they cannot do separately. They know that what's good for one county is good for all of them.

The people of the Tennessee River Valley have put it all together. The industry came. Growth and progress came, and it was all done with a combination of government assistance incentives that were offered, but not imposed on local people. But again, the real work was done by folks at the grass roots with vision; people unwilling to accept the status quo; people who cared enough about their home towns and counties to make certain that they would grow and prosper.

Now what we need are more success stories like the one in Decatur-Huntsville. We hope sincerely that the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Bill our committee introduced yesterday will go a long way toward making more success stories.

It will provide loan money for the enormous capital needs of rural communities, and it will give American industry incentives to develop in areas of our country with fewer than 35,000 people.

You will be hearing more about this legislation as it makes its way through the Congress. Your own Senator Jim Allen is one of the cosponsors. I hope the people of Alabama will join in encouraging its adoption. I believe it is the cornerstone for a balanced national growth policy for our Nation. It will not only encourage people to remain in small-town America, but permit many who have had to leave an opportunity to return to where their families and friends are.

It is legislation which I believe persons of any political persuasion can support, because it is for the benefit of our entire Nation.

This is the second field hearing held by this Subcommittee. Our first was in early May in Sioux City, Iowa and Vermillion, South Dakota. We were privileged to hear from the governors of both of those states during the course of our hearings, and we are pleased that today we can have the benefit of the experience

of Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama. On behalf of the Subcommittee I would like to thank the Governor for his hospitality and for his interest and participation in our work.

With that, let us begin our formal hearings. Do any of our other Senators have comments they wish to make?

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

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EVER SINCE OUR NEW RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
WENT TO WORK EARLY THIS YEAR, WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT
NATIONAL GROWTH.

THE PROBLEMS FACING OUR NATION ARE MANY AND DIFFICULT.
PEOPLE HAVE LEFT THE COUNTRYSIDE, POURING INTO THE MAJOR
METROPOLITAN AREAS, SO THE RURAL COMMUNITY HAS BECOME POOR
AND THE BIG CITY HAS BECOME OVERBURDENED, STRUGGLING TO
PROVIDE ADEQUATE SERVICES WHILE TRYING TO KEEP TAXES AT
REASONABLE LEVELS.

OUR PEOPLE HAVE LOCATED IN INCREASING NUMBERS ALONG
THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC COASTAL AREAS, THE GULF AND THE
GREAT LAKES. WHAT IS NEEDED IS A BALANCED GROWTH BETWEEN
THE URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF OUR COUNTRY.

BOTH ALABAMA AND GEORGIA HAVE SHOWN THAT INDUSTRY CAN BE DISPERSED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY -- THAT IT DOESN'T NEED TO LOCATE ONLY AROUND THE BIG POPULATION CENTERS.

THE SOUTH HAS PROVED THAT HOMETOWN INITIATIVE WITH A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF GOVERNMENT ACTION CAN TURN THINGS AROUND, MAKING RENEWED AREAS OUT OF DEPRESSED AREAS.

OUR TRIP THIS MORNING TO DECATUR WAS A VISIT TO ONE OF THESE SUCCESS STORIES. DURING THE 1930s, THE 15 COUNTIES IN THE TENNESSEE RIVER VALLEY WERE ON A DEPRESSED, ONE CROP ECONOMY. THERE WAS CHRONIC MALARIA. THESE FACTORS COMBINED WITH A NATIONAL DEPRESSION DIDN'T LEAVE MUCH ROOM FOR HOPE.

THEN THE TVA CAME. BUT IT DIDN'T COME OFFERING TO SOLVE ALL OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN ALABAMA, BUT RATHER OFFERING PEOPLE A CHANCE TO HELP THEMSELVES.

THE MEN OF TVA DIDN'T OFFER AN INDUSTRIAL BOOM, BUT INSTEAD THEY BEGAN WITH A PLAN TO CONQUER THE MALARIA, AND TO DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY OF THE 15 COUNTIES AND THEY BEGAN BY EMPHASIZING THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF AGRICULTURE.

BUT THE LOCAL PEOPLE HAD TO DO THE WORK, AND THIS IS WHAT IT IS GOING TO TAKE. THE 15 COUNTIES OF THE TENNESSEE RIVER VALLEY PLAN TOGETHER FOR THEIR MUTUAL DEVELOPMENT, BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT TOGETHER THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH WHAT THEY CANNOT DO SEPARATELY. THEY KNOW THAT WHAT'S GOOD FOR ONE COUNTY IS GOOD FOR ALL OF THEM.

THE PEOPLE OF THE TENNESSEE RIVER VALLEY HAVE PUT IT ALL TOGETHER. THE INDUSTRY CAME. GROWTH AND PROGRESS CAME, AND IT WAS ALL DONE WITH A COMBINATION OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE INCENTIVES THAT WERE OFFERED, BUT NOT IMPOSED ON LOCAL PEOPLE. BUT AGAIN, THE REAL WORK WAS DONE BY FOLKS AT THE GRASS ROOTS WITH VISION; PEOPLE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT THE STATUS QUO; PEOPLE WHO CARED ENOUGH ABOUT THEIR HOME TOWNS AND COUNTIES TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT THEY WOULD GROW AND PROSPER.

NOW WHAT WE NEED ARE MORE SUCCESS STORIES LIKE THE ONE IN DECATUR-HUNTSVILLE. WE HOPE SINCERELY THAT THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT BILL OUR COMMITTEE INTRODUCED YESTERDAY WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD MAKING MORE SUCCESS STORIES.

IT WILL PROVIDE LOAN MONEY FOR THE ENORMOUS CAPITAL NEEDS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES, AND IT WILL GIVE AMERICAN INDUSTRY INCENTIVES TO DEVELOP IN AREAS OF OUR COUNTRY WITH FEWER THAN 35,000 PEOPLE.

YOU WILL BE HEARING MORE ABOUT THIS LEGISLATION AS IT MAKES ITS WAY THROUGH THE CONGRESS. YOUR OWN SENATOR JIM ALLEN IS ONE OF THE COSPONSORS. I HOPE THE PEOPLE OF ALABAMA WILL JOIN IN ENCOURAGING ITS ADOPTION. I BELIEVE IT IS THE CORNERSTONE FOR A BALANCED NATIONAL GROWTH POLICY FOR OUR NATION. IT WILL NOT ONLY ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO REMAIN IN SMALL-TOWN AMERICA, BUT PERMIT MANY WHO HAVE HAD TO LEAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN TO WHERE THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS ARE.

IT IS LEGISLATION WHICH I BELIEVE PERSONS OF ANY
POLITICAL PERSUASION CAN SUPPORT, BECAUSE IT IS FOR THE
BENEFIT OF OUR ENTIRE NATION.

THIS IS THE SECOND FIELD HEARING HELD BY THIS
SUBCOMMITTEE. OUR FIRST WAS IN EARLY MAY IN SIOUX CITY,
IOWA AND VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA. WE WERE PRIVILEGED
TO HEAR FROM THE GOVERNORS OF BOTH OF THOSE STATES
DURING THE COURSE OF OUR HEARINGS, AND WE ARE PLEASED
THAT TODAY WE CAN HAVE THE BENEFIT OF THE EXPERIENCE
OF GOVERNOR GEORGE C. WALLACE OF ALABAMA. ON BEHALF
OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE GOVERNOR
FOR HIS HOSPITALITY AND FOR HIS INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION
IN OUR WORK.

WITH THAT, LET US BEGIN OUR FORMAL HEARINGS. DO
ANY OF OUR OTHER SENATORS HAVE COMMENTS THEY WISH TO
MAKE?

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