

SENATOR HUMPHREY'S REMARKS

FIRST ANNUAL  
MINNESOTA RURAL YOUTH INSTITUTE

SOUTHWEST STATE UNIVERSITY  
MARSHALL, MINNESOTA

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I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE TONIGHT TO TALK ABOUT A SUBJECT VERY CLOSE TO US -- RURAL AMERICA. I CAN NOT THINK OF A PLACE MORE APPROPRIATE TO ADDRESS THIS SUBJECT THAN SOUTHWEST STATE UNIVERSITY, AN INSTITUTION THAT PROMISES TO DISTINGUISH ITSELF IN THE AREA OF RURAL AFFAIRS, NOT ONLY IN MINNESOTA, BUT THROUGHOUT THIS NATION.

BEFORE I BEGIN, I WANT TO CONGRATULATE ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF THE RURAL YOUTH INSTITUTE. UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT JON WEFALD -- ONE OF THE FINEST COMMISSIONERS OF AGRICULTURE MINNESOTA HAS EVER HAD -- THE INSTITUTE IS BOUND TO FLOURISH. THE CONCEPT IS SOUND.

UNLESS YOUTH CAN BE CONVINCED THAT RURAL AMERICA OFFERS PROMISE, THE YOUNG WILL CONTINUE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRYSIDE FOR URBAN LIFE. WHILE THIS TREND SHOWS SOME SIGN OF REVERSING ITSELF, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT

MECHANISMS SUCH AS THIS INSTITUTE BE CREATED TO  
DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM IN A CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER.

IN THINKING ABOUT RURAL LIFE, IT IS IMPORTANT  
TO REMEMBER THAT MAN EXISTED FOR YEARS AND YEARS  
WITHOUT EITHER THE BLESSING OR THE CURSE OF CITIES.  
IT WAS ONLY WHEN MAN COULD PRODUCE A SURPLUS OF FOOD  
THAT CITIES WERE CREATED. WITH ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY  
AND WORKER PRODUCTIVITY IN AGRIBUSINESS, URBAN AREAS  
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD GREW AND PROSPERED.

THIS HISTORIC RURAL TO URBAN EXODUS, WHICH HAS  
OCCURRED WORLDWIDE FOR CENTURIES, HAS NOT BEEN WITHOUT  
ITS SIDE EFFECTS. AS POPULATIONS SHIFTED TO CITIES,  
THE NEEDS OF THOSE LEFT IN RURAL REGIONS INCREASINGLY  
WERE NEGLECTED.

THIS BECAME MORE EVIDENT IN THE UNITED STATES IN THIS CENTURY, PARTICULARLY AFTER WORLD WAR II. WITH THE ADVENT OF MODERN COMMUNICATIONS, MAN WAS FORCED TO CONFRONT THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL LIFE, NOT ONLY HERE AT HOME BUT ABROAD AS WELL.

IN MY COMMENTS TONIGHT, I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE OUR OWN SITUATION HERE IN THIS COUNTRY. HOWEVER, I WOULD BE REMISS NOT TO MENTION THAT RURAL PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD HAVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS. IT IS TRUE THAT THE NATURE OR DEPTH OF THE PROBLEMS MAY BE DIFFERENT, BUT BASICALLY THEY ARE THE SAME.

WE LIVE IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD WITH COMMON PROBLEMS. WHEN WE FINALLY RECOGNIZE AND BEGIN TO COPE WITH THIS REALITY, THEN WE WILL TAKE A LONG STEP DOWN THE ROAD OF SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF MANKIND.

THE STATED POLICY OF THIS NATION HAS BEEN TO STRIVE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE SAME RATE AS URBAN DEVELOPMENT. IF MUCH DISCREPANCY EXISTS BETWEEN THE STANDARDS OF LIVING BETWEEN THOSE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, SERIOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE ALMOST SURE TO ARISE.

A MAJOR LANDMARK IN PUBLIC POLICY REGARDING RURAL DEVELOPMENT WAS ACCOMPLISHED WHEN THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1972, WHICH I SPONSORED, WENT INTO EFFECT.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE FULL BENEFITS OF THIS LEGISLATION HAVE NOT BEEN FELT BY RURAL AMERICANS. UNTIL THIS YEAR, THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH HAS DIFFERED PHILOSOPHICALLY WITH THE CONGRESS AS TO HOW RURAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. THIS RESULTED IN SOME OF THE AUTHORIZED PROGRAMS NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED FULLY OR IN A TIMELY MANNER.

A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS CONTINUE TO PLAGUE RURAL AMERICA. MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH AS A RESULT OF THE 1972 ACT. PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT, IN MANY RESPECTS, IS THE EMPLOYMENT PICTURE.

THE JOB SITUATION HAS MANY DIMENSIONS. THERE IS A HIGH DEGREE OF HOPELESSNESS AMONG THE RURAL UNEMPLOYED. A LOWER PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE OF WORKING AGE IN RURAL AREAS ARE LOOKING FOR WORK THAN THE UNEMPLOYED IN URBAN AREAS.

THE REASONS FOR THIS, WHILE NOT OBVIOUS, ARE NONE THE LESS EVIDENT. THE DIVERSITY OF OPPORTUNITY THAT IS AVAILABLE IN CITIES SIMPLY DOES NOT EXIST IN RURAL AREAS. AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WAGES ARE LOWER.

IN 1975, THE MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME WAS \$11,600 FOR RURAL FAMILIES, WHILE IT WAS \$14,909 FOR URBAN FAMILIES -- A \$3,309 DIFFERENCE. BUT THE REASONS DO NOT STOP THERE. THE JOBS THAT ARE AVAILABLE IN RURAL AREAS ARE LOWER SKILLED. INDEED, THIS COMBINATION OF FACTORS CONSTITUTES THE HEART OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THAT RURAL AMERICANS EXPERIENCE.

WE NEED JOBS FOR RURAL AMERICAN AND THEY NEED TO BE GOOD JOBS!

HOUSING IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF THE SAD STORY ON RURAL AMERICA. RURAL AMERICANS OCCUPY ONE-THIRD OF ALL THE HOUSING IN THE U. S. YET THEY OCCUPY 56 PERCENT OF ALL THE SUB-STANDARD HOUSING IN THIS COUNTRY.

THE FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION WAS CREATED IN THE MIDST OF THE DEPRESSION TO MAKE LOANS AND GRANTS FOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE IN RURAL AREAS. PRIVATE LENDING INSTITUTIONS SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE THE FAITH IN RURAL AMERICA OR THE NECESSARY CAPITAL TO FINANCE RURAL HOUSING NEEDS.

HOWEVER, THE FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT ALWAYS FULFILLED ITS CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE. IT WAS THE INTENT OF CONGRESS THAT THOSE MOST IN NEED GET FIRST PRIORITY ON HOUSING LOANS. BUT, THE FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION BEGAN TO VIEW ITSELF AS A CONVENTIONAL LENDING INSTITUTION AND THEREFORE CHOSE TO OVERLOOK THE NEEDS OF THE POOREST RURAL AMERICANS.

IN RECENT YEARS THIS SITUATION HAS BEEN SHAMEFULL. THOSE WITH MODERATE INCOMES HAVE BEEN FIGHTING FOR LOANS AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE POOR -- ALL DURING A TIME PERIOD WHEN THE FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION FAILED TO USE ITS TOTAL APPROPRIATED FUNDS.

ANOTHER PROBLEM AREA IN RURAL LIFE IS EDUCATION. THE SAD FACT IS THAT RURAL AREAS HAVE LAGGED FAR BEHIND URBAN AREAS. ONLY THREE YEARS AGO, EIGHT PERCENT OF RURAL ADULTS WERE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE, HAVING LESS THAN FIVE YEARS OF SCHOOLING. EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL IN RURAL VERSUS URBAN AREAS ARE DISGRACEFUL.

CLEARLY, PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS ARE AT A SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE WHEN IT COMES TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY.

OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES ARE LACKING. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS WEAK IN RURAL AREAS. RAILROAD LINES HAVE BEEN REDUCED, AIRPORT FACILITIES MAY BE FAR AWAY

AND PROVIDE LIMITED SERVICE, AND BUS LINES NOW FIND IT UNPROFITABLE TO STOP AT TOWNS THAT HAVE HAD SUCH SERVICE FOR DECADES.

WITH LOW POPULATION DENSITY AND PROPERTY VALUES, OTHER LESS OBVIOUS TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS ARISE. TAXES OFTEN ARE INSUFFICIENT TO PAY FOR UPKEEP OF ROADS AND BRIDGES.

HIGH QUALITY LAW ENFORCEMENT ALSO OFTEN IS HARD TO COME BY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES. AGAIN, INADEQUATE REVENUES IS THE PROBLEM.

ANOTHER PROBLEM IS WATER AND SEWER SERVICE. INADEQUATE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL IS A FREQUENTLY FOUND PROBLEM.

FIRE PREVENTION IN RURAL AREAS IS ANOTHER MAJOR CONCERN. FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT IS COSTLY AND PERSONNEL SHORTAGES PLAGUE MANY AREAS.

AND HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ARE LACKING. IT IS MORE PROFITABLE FOR DOCTORS, PARTICULARLY SPECIALISTS, TO LOCATE IN URBAN AREAS. AS A RESULT, ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE IS NOT EASILY AVAILABLE IN NON-METROPOLITAN AREAS.

SOME RURAL AMERICANS, OF COURSE, ARE MORE FORTUNATE THAN OTHERS. SO, WHO ARE THE UNFORTUNATE?

STATISTICS PLAINLY SHOW THAT THE BLACK AND THE ELDERLY SHOW UP WORSE THAN THE AVERAGE RURAL INDIVIDUAL IN THE QUALITY OF LIFESTYLE, EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE THAT THEY RECEIVE.

BUT, WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS ON THIS LITANY OF PROBLEMS. THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1972 HAS GIVEN US A STATUTORY AND FUNDING BASE FOR COPING WITH MOST OF THE PROBLEMS OUTLINED ABOVE.

UNFORTUNATELY, FUNDING LEVELS HAVE BEEN INADEQUATE OR THE EXECUTIVE HAS LACKED THE INSPIRATION IT NEEDS TO PROPERLY FULFILL THE WILL OF THE CONGRESS.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED THAT WE HAVE FAILED TO MAKE LONGER STRIDES. SENATOR HERMAN TALMADGE, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY, WARNED THAT:

"THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1972 WILL ENABLE THIS NATION TO HELP TO DEVELOP MORE AND BETTER JOBS AND INCOME EARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURES OF POPULATION, OVERCROWDING AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION IN THE CITIES. HOWEVER, THE ENACTMENT OF THIS LEGISLATION IS ONLY A BEGINNING. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH MUST DO AN AGGRESSIVE, DEDICATED JOB OF IMPLEMENTING AND ADMINISTERING THE LAW IF THE INTENT OF CONGRESS IS TO BE HONORED."

UNFORTUNATELY, CHAIRMAN TALMADE'S CONCERNS WERE REAL.

WHILE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, UNDER SECRETARY BERGLAND, OFFERS BRIGHT HOPE FOR FULFILLING MANY OF THESE BROKEN MANDATES, CONGRESS HAS NOT ALWAYS LIVED UP TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES EITHER. A BRIEF REVIEW OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS UNDER THE '72 ACT DEPICTS QUESTIONABLE COMMITMENT BY CONGRESS.

IN A NUMBER OF AREAS, CONGRESS SIMPLY HAS NOT APPROPRIATED THE FUNDING NEEDED TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THIS LEGISLATION. WE HAVE YET TO FULLY FUND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING GRANTS, AUTHORITIES TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PUBLIC BODIES FOR CONTROL OF AGRICULTURE-RELATED POLLUTION AND DISPOSAL OF SOLID WASTES, AND AUTHORITY FOR THE

SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO CARRY OUT A LAND  
INVENTORY AND MONITORING PROGRAM TO STUDY EROSION  
AND SEDIMENT DAMAGES, SOIL, WATER AND RELATED  
RESOURCE CONDITIONS AT NOT LESS THAN FIVE YEAR INTERVALS.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE 1972 ACT AUTHORIZED RESEARCH  
BY OUR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO INSURE THAT  
OUR FARM UNITS ARE AS EFFICIENT AS POSSIBLE. FUNDS HAVE  
NOT BEEN REQUESTED FOR THIS TYPE OF ENDEAVOR. AND,  
THIS COMES AT A TIME WHEN THE NEWS MEDIA HAS INFORMED  
US THAT AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS ARE THE FASTEST GROWING  
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NATION.

CONGRESS HAS HAD ITS FAILURES IN FULFILLING  
THE NEEDS OF RURAL AMERICA. BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME  
TO BEMOAN THE PAST. IT IS THE TIME TO LOOK TO THE  
FUTURE.

WE IN THE CONGRESS MUST AGGRESSIVELY SEEK TO EQUATE RURAL AND URBAN STANDARDS OF LIVING. IF WE FIND THAT WE DO NOT HAVE THE TOOLS TO BUILD AN ADEQUATE BALANCE BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL GROWTH, THEN WE SHOULD DESIGN NEW TOOLS.

IT IS TIME TO MAKE A BOLD MOVE FORWARD IN THE STEPS TOWARD RURAL PROGRESS. THE AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 1970 STATES THAT "THE CONGRESS COMMITS ITSELF TO A SOUND BALANCE BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN AMERICA. THE CONGRESS CONSIDERS THIS BALANCE SO ESSENTIAL TO PEACE, PROSPERITY AND WELFARE OF ALL OF OUR CITIZENS THAT HIGHEST PRIORITY MUST BE GIVEN TO THE REVITALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS".

WE MUST LIVE UP TO THAT PROMISE. IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF THIS NATION THAT WE HAVE A STRONG RURAL AMERICA. OUR ROOTS LIE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

LIFE IN THE RURAL AREAS MUST IMPROVE, OR FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO MOVE TO THE CITIES. THIS WOULD LEAD US FURTHER DOWN THE PATH OF HIGHLY MECHANIZED, CAPITAL-INTENSIVE AGRICULTURE.

WE NEED A HEALTHY RURAL AMERICA. WITHOUT ONE, WE WILL HAVE FORECLOSED OUR OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE.



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