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Excerpts of Remarks of
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Texas Farmers Union
Fort Worth, Texas
December 4, 1959

- (1) Full Freedom for Every American
(2) Econ Potential
(3) Just Enduring
Base

Farmers
Forgotten
MAN!!

Some years ago, Franklin D. Roosevelt made famous the phrase,
"the forgotten man."

Today, there definitely is a "forgotten man" in the eyes of
the present Administration -- the American farmer.

I don't need to remind any of you that the American economy
has had its ups and downs since this administration took office.
But it has always worked out so that the farmer shared in all the
"downs" but was left out in the cold during the "ups."

Let me give you some examples of how the farmer has been left
out in the cold -- down and out.

During the first five years of this Administration, net farm
income declined by about two percent a year -- while non-farm net
income rose by two percent a year.

And in 1958, the income per person on the farm was just about
half the income per person off the farm. And I'm not just talking
about cash income -- I'm talking about total income.

This year, according to the Republican hucksters, we're
supposed to be in a boom. If you don't believe me, just ask the
Republican National Committee. They'll tell you how rosy everything
is supposed to be.

Well, before these Republican propagandists write up their
press releases, they must throw away all the figures they get about
the American farmer. Because during this so-called Republican boom,

Farm

Prosperity - For Whom?

things certainly aren't rosy down on the farm.

✓ Sure, during the first nine months of this year, the income of the American people as a whole went up nine billion dollars. 000076

But what happened to farm income?

✓ You know -- it went down by more than two billion dollars.

Net farm income during this so-called "boom year" has gone down more than 23%.

In terms of dollars with the same buying power, the net income of agriculture this year is the lowest in 19 years.

The parity ratio is lower today than at any time since 1940.

Is it any wonder I say that I say the American farmer is today's "forgotten man"? Farmers Share of Food Dollar 38¢ - was 32¢ in 1932

✓ Now of course the Republicans would like to have you forget that you're the forgotten man. And they've adopted a new technique for doing that. They've appointed a special committee of experts to tell you how great things are going to be for you 17 years from now -- in 1976. Percy Report

✓ You know, it's annamazing thing. The Republican Party has been in business for over a hundred years now -- and it has to organize a committee to tell it what it stands for.

Well, this committee had a lot of high-sounding phrases to solve the farm problem. But when you cut through them and boil them down to simple English, they say, simply "We Republicans like Ezra!" GOP Likes Ezra

✓ So if you want to know where you'll be in 1976 under the Republicans' long-range program, just try to imagine going through 17 more years just like the past six -- of falling prices, falling parity, falling income -- and failing farms. 1976? you'll see!

17 more yrs of GOP NC! more ...

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I know you can't afford many more years like the past six -- and I don't think America can either.

The Wrong Answer to the Wrong Question

I've been doing a lot of thinking about the current plight of the American farmers, and also about the Great Depression of 1929 -- at the end of another Republican administration. And I've come to the conclusion that there's a frightening similarity between the

two

Thirty years ago, as the businessmen of that other Republican Administration surveyed the phony boom of the late 1920's, they concluded that the country was suffering from one thing: overproduction.

Well, the Republican farm program of the 1950's starts from the same basic premise: that the basic farm problem is overproduction.

And having drawn that conclusion, they pick the most inhuman solution to it: lower prices and break the farmer's back -- then, according to Republican doctrine, there won't be so many farmers -- and maybe they won't produce so much.

This is the most inhuman solution, and it is also the most ineffective. ~~We've all learned that over the past six years.~~ Any solution to the farm program that flies in the face of human nature -- and of humaneness -- is bound to fail.

What has been the result of this deliberate Republican policy of farm deflation? Who has benefitted?

Not the consumer -- for while the prices received by farmers have chopped severely since 1952, the price of food to the consumer has gone up sharply.

Not the worker -- for the worker is basically a consumer.

more...

Not the Businessman
Not the Surplus Absorber

1920's
overproduction

No
Consumer
Benefit

Food
up

Not the businessman -- for if the farm income hadn't dropped off by billions and billions of dollars, farmers would have much more money to buy the products of business.

Nor have the surpluses been reduced. Quite the contrary -- today they are several times what they were when this deliberate farm deflation policy was started.

And if the Republicans in Washington knew anything about human nature, they would have known from the beginning that increased production -- yes, surpluses -- would result from deliberately depressing farm prices. As long as the American farmer is a free and independent man, he will try to make up for lower prices by planting more. It's just plain common sense and economic necessity.

The True Surplus -- Hunger

The result of the current farm policy has been a great deal of suffering. The farmers have suffered, the consumers have suffered, business has suffered -- but there's another group of people who have suffered, too.

I'm talking about the millions of people who go to bed hungry every night, simply because they can't get the food to feed themselves or their families.

Many of those people are right here in the United States.

Millions more are abroad.

How shameful that America's granaries should be bulging at their seams while there remains a mouth unfed.

How shameful that the American taxpayer should be paying a million dollars a day to store our mounting surpluses -- instead of devoting that money to help feed the hungry and clothe the needy.

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I am not talking about dumping our products abroad and destroying world markets.

I am talking about reaching out with a humane, helping hand to nations who cannot buy foodstuffs in the world market, but who need our help desperately.

Why don't the Republicans give their enthusiastic support to a Food for Peace plan such as I have proposed?

I'll tell you why: because the Republican spokesmen are afraid it will cost too much money. But they ignore the cost of doing nothing -- or too little.

Let me tell you something about the image of America abroad. I have had the good fortune to travel quite a bit in recent years, and I have seen what the world thinks of America.

FDR Do you remember that Franklin Roosevelt used to talk about the Good Neighbor policy? Well, everyone in the world believed he meant just that, because Franklin Roosevelt was a good Neighbor right in his own country. Everybody knew that Franklin Roosevelt loved people and believed in "Love Thy Neighbor".

And when President Truman inaugurated the Point Four program to help the downtrodden countries of the world, that rang true, too, because the world knew that Harry Truman was the friend of the downtrodden here at home.

But America doesn't enjoy that same image today. And do you know why? Because when the world looks at Uncle GOP today, it sees "dollar signs" in his eyes. They are the eyes of a money lender, or a rich relative, and not the eyes of a humanitarian who believes in people and in sharing ~~his~~ good fortune to relieve misfortune.

more ...

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Besides using food for peace, there are other great things that this country could do. We could put our young men to work in forests and parks, conserving and building our great national wealth. I have proposed such a program -- a Youth Conservation Corps -- but Uncle GOP says no!

We could have a food stamp plan to supplement the diets of our needy -- but Uncle GOP says no!

And if Uncle GOP were truly thrifty -- and smart -- we could have a farm policy that would strengthen the farm economy, the national economy, and the economy of the free world -- and it would cost a lot less tax money than the present Republican mess.

A Policy of Despair

The Republicans have not offered us a farm program -- not last week, nor last year, nor any of the seven years they have been in power. The farm policies they have followed have weakened the ability of the government to aid farmers, have driven the young people from the land, have stifled the rural business communities.

And the Republican policies have not resulted in benefit to the cities either. When the young men and women turn from the land, go to the cities to seek their fortunes and new ways of life, they find no opportunities awaiting them. There has been no program to prepare the cities for the people, or the people for the cities. The Republican farm policies are matched by their bankrupt policies in regard to labor, education, health and urban development.

Present farm policies have brought us to the place where farmers and their children feel there is no hope in the land; they are met with discouragement on every side.

Fourth

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Present farm policies have paved the way for the seizure of America's vast acres of agricultural land by corporate interest, by corporate powers. The people in the cities are being softened up for this seizure by the Madison Avenue boys who control the channels of communication. That is why every other slick magazine you pick up has another article that makes the farmer the whipping boy for the extravagant, wasteful, eroding farm policies. Divide and conquer in the name of corporate interest.

You know and I know that unrestricted corporate economic power over our land and our people spells exploitation -- and heartless use of human resources and soil resources and water resources -- that does not take into account the present and future needs of the people in our own country or of the people of the world.

A Charter of Hope for Farmers

What do I think we should do about a farm policy?

I believe that Congress should set forth the goals for American agriculture, and then give the President and the Secretary of Agriculture a wide variety of tools for the attainment of those goals, and broad discretion in the choice of those tools. And I believe farmers themselves should have a voice in this matter which concerns them so vitally.

I spelled out these ideas in the Humphrey Family Farm Program Development Act which I introduced last August. This is a Charter of Hope.

What are the goals?

First is a determination of a fair price for farm commodities and a fair income standard for farmers. Income per farm person is only about half the income per non-farm person. This lop-sided

more...

situation can't be changed overnight, but it can be gradually changed if pricing policies are geared to the attainment of a fair income for farmers -- and this can be accomplished in a way that lessens the tax burden, instead of piling it higher and higher.

#2 The second objective is a production goal. This goal should be determined by what is needed to satisfy the true needs of the American people, the commercial export market, necessary reserves, and foreign policy purposes.

And this goal should not be met by a deliberate policy of farm deflation, of breaking the farmer's back to reduce production. There are more humane and more effective ways of achieving production goals in agriculture, and they should be used.

#3 Third, we need an agricultural resources conservation program. This is an integral part of any comprehensive farm program. Any land adjustment program must take into account our present needs -- needs of farmers, needs of consumers, needs of rural communities, and needs of generations to come. Every American has a stake in the present and the future productivity of our land. Our growing population makes this so.

The time when a frontier farmer could "mine" his land and move on to another farm -- leaving behind him starved, tree-less, eroded land -- is far in our past. Soil and water resources are vital to national well-being -- and to international well-being.

Therefore, a comprehensive land use program must be based on the facts of both present and potential consumption needs. It must safeguard the well-being of the family farmer. An agricultural resources conservation program is the heart of a sound, forward-looking farm program.

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④ Fourth, we should have employment goals for American agriculture. These goals should envisage a farm population, and especially farm families, which have adequate opportunity to be fully and usefully employed on our farms. They should include proper credit facilities to strengthen the operation of the family type farm. They should also include employment opportunities for those ~~which~~ within the farm population who may wish to transfer to other occupations.

↳ Undoubtedly there would be some mistakes and some difficulties, even under this kind of program. But such a program, being based upon sound and worthy objectives, would be self-repairing instead of self-defeating.

↳ It would bring supply and demand into balance at the highest possible levels, instead of trying to bring them into balance at depressed levels.

↳ It would use income progress, rather than income deflation, as a tool for farm production adjustment.

↳ It would, in the long run, reduce public costs by substituting sanity for confusion.

It would unite instead of divide the worker and the farmer, the producer and consumer, by using a full prosperity program for agriculture as a reinforcement to a full prosperity program for all, and by promoting the full prosperity of others as a reinforcement to the full prosperity of farmers.

↳ It would help us to advance the American economy as a whole by seeing it as a whole, instead of mistreating the economy by breaking it down into arbitrary bits and pieces.

more ..

Worker
Farmer

now
3 million
unemployed

It would bring our agricultural efforts into the further service of free world humanity and world peace. It would make us look at our so-called wheat surplus in terms of national and world-wide needs. When you do that it becomes a strategic and vital reserve that lends strength and security to the free world. Instead of considering our store of wheat as only a burdensome problem, a weight upon the farmer and a drag on the economy, it should be treated as the source of moral, political and economic strength.

We should look at the quantities of food held in reserve, and the productive capacity of our land just as we look at money in the bank -- this is our capital goods, our capital treasure. Money is worthless piled up in a bank. Only when it is put to use does it have true worth, true value, true meaning to people.

From Biblical times, down through the centuries, wheat has been a symbol of life and hope to all mankind. A kernel of wheat is indeed a spark of life. All over the world people pray: "Give us this day, Our daily bread."

Health Educ

(White Fleet)

A Charter of Hope for All

I have spoken of the kind of goals which should be part of our farm policy -- goals I have incorporated in the Humphrey Family Farm Program Development Act. I see an America in which we can and should attain such goals, not only for agriculture, but also for the Nation at large. We need to set goals for social security expansion, for wage expansion, for business expansion, for education and health improvement -- all reinforcing one another, all consistent strains in the symphony of American effort, and all responsive to the new pace of our technology and science and invention.

Then -- and only then -- will we be able to lead the world to rising standards of living, and to peace.

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Let me give you some examples of how the farmer has been left out in the cold -- down and out.

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And in 1958, the income per person on the farm was just about half the income per person off the farm. And I'm not just talking about cash income -- I'm talking about total income.

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Well, before these Republican propagandists write up their press releases, they must throw away all the figures they get about the American farmer. Because during this so-called Republican boom,

things certainly aren't rosy down on the farm.

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But what happened to farm income?

You know -- it went down by more than two billion dollars.

Net farm income during this so-called "boom year" has gone down more than 24%.

In terms of dollars with the same buying power, the net income of agriculture this year is the lowest in 19 years.

The parity ratio is lower today than at any time since 1940.

Is it any wonder I say that I say the American farmer is today's "forgotten man"?

Now of course the Republicans would like to have you forget that you're the forgotten man. And they've adopted a new technique for doing that. They've appointed a special committee of experts to tell you how great things are going to be for you 17 years from now -- in 1976.

You know, it's an amazing thing. The Republican Party has been in business for over a hundred years now -- and it has to organize a committee to tell it what it stands for.

Well, this committee had a lot of high-sounding phrases to solve the farm problem. But when you cut through them and boil them down to simple English, they say, simply "We Republicans like Ezra!"

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