



HOTEL

Saint Paul

St. Paul, Minnesota

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Press Dispatch

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PRESS RELEASE

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minnesota)
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St. Paul, Minnesota
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Date: December 10th, 1952

Senator Humphrey in an appearance before a dinner group and forum meeting of the Agricultural Education Committee at Foley, Minnesota, tonight, made the following statements:

"MAIN STREET AND THE FARM"

"We've learned in recent years that the various economic groups in this country must work together. Business and labor and agriculture -- and government too -- must understand one another. They must be aware of the other fellow's problems. They must not lose themselves completely in their own problems.

"Economically, we go up or down together. Many years ago, perhaps, it may have been possible for one economic group to be prosperous when the others were depressed. But in the present complex economic setup our lives are extremely interdependent. Every economic group is a cog, a wheel, or a cylinder in the Nation's economic motor. To keep going ahead smoothly, the motor must keep hitting on all its cylinders.

"Now there is no part of our economic engine that is more vital to city people than our agriculture. But the fuel that keeps our agriculture going is the purchases of food and fiber by the nonfarm people of this Nation.

"In other words, Main Street and the farm are interdependent. They have mutual interests. And among those mutual interests is the preservation of a sound, prosperous agriculture for the welfare of all our people.

Farm programs do not exist solely for the benefit of farm people. They exist also for the benefit of Main Street. They are intended to serve all the people. That's the measuring stick of all government action -- the welfare of all the people, or the common good.

"Any program, whether it's for labor, for agriculture, or for business must stand or fall according to how well it serves the common good.

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During the past few years we have developed an effective program of price supports for storable agricultural commodities. This program needs to be re-adjusted in terms of agricultural economics today. I strongly recommend that the principle of 90 - 100% of parity be incorporated into new agricultural legislative policy.

The most difficult problem confronting both government and the farmer is the means and method of administering a price support program for the perishable agricultural products. Both political parties have made firm commitments pledging legislative action to guarantee a price support program for perishable products. It is now the responsibility of farmers in their organizations and the Congress with the President to fulfill this promise to the farmers. Let's not forget that over 3/4 of all agricultural income comes from the production of perishable products. In Minnesota where we have emphasized diversified farming a price support program for perishable commodities is of the utmost importance. Our dairy farmers, for example, have suffered because of the failure of the present legislation to provide reasonable prices. The cost of feed has gone up. The cost of farm operation has trebled in the past ten years, but the price of our dairy products and other perishable goods has not kept pace. The dairy farmer in particular has been suffering from surpluses. The method of buying up surpluses and storing them only to have them be wasted has provoked a great outcry from the American public. Taxpayers are willing to give everyone a fair deal, but not at the expense of wasteful administration. We must seek a new answer and we must be willing to examine all proposals on the basis of facts not partisanship.

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"I pledge to the farmers of this state that I shall do everything within my power as a member of Congress to work for and support an effective system of price supports for perishable commodities. This system or price support policy must not only be faire to the farmer but alos to the taxpayer and consumer. Overall agricultural policy must place greater emphasis upon research, methods of distribution, new processes for manufacturing products from perishable commodities, and increased consumer consumption.

"We dare not fail in developing this new agricultural policy. It would be nothing short of tragedy to permit a long established program of diversified farming to break down because of the failure of government policies and farm organization programs. The first step in developing a new agricultural policy for perishable commodities must come from the farmers themselves. We have to do some frank and honest re-thinking in full recognition of the economic and production facts of American agriculture.

"Sometimes, when people discuss farm programs, they talk and think only in terms of dollars -- dollars in profits and dollars in cost. There's more to it than the dollar side. There's a human side. There are profits in human values that must be considered, and there are heavy human costs in failing to have adequate farm programs.

"Agriculture is not merely a commercial venture. At least in part it is also a public service, and farmers can rightfully take pride and satisfaction in their contribution to the health and well-being of the rest of the Nation.

"The real dirt farmer understands that pride, but I doubt if the corporation farmer or absentee farm owner -- sitting in a city office

"and directing an industrialized type of farm unit -- can ever fully understand it except in material terms. It takes a farmer with his feet firmly planted in his own soil who has planted crops by his own hands, watched them grow into maturity, and then harvested them himself to appreciate that inner satisfaction.

"But how long can the farmer maintain that pride in producing abundantly for others if he fails to get enough in return to provide for his family those necessities for that decent standard of living?

"Agriculture contributes even more than ordinary food and fiber to the Nation. It contributes moral food and fiber, too. Rural communities are still the seed bed of society. They help preserve individual opportunity in our free enterprise system. We look to prosperous rural communities, mainly composed of economically strong families farming in the traditional American pattern of family-sized farms, as one of the best bulwarks of democracy.

"We must make sure that we are adequately maintaining those standards of rural life -- the rural home, the rural schools, the rural church. We must preserve the family farm that is the heart of our rural community. We must offer the economic opportunities so necessary to maintaining a strong rural America as the backbone of our democracy.

We dare not ignore these human values in agriculture. We dare not ignore them in planning national farm programs. And we must not cease to measure proposals for farm legislation by our standards of human values, as well as by dollar values. That is a matter of vital importance to both Main Street and farm."

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