

From the Office of
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
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FOR RELEASE
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Despite the "crying need for telephones on the farms of America", rural telephone progress has failed to keep pace with other modern progress of recent decades, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn.) declared today in dedicating the new dial system recently installed by the Farmers Mutual Telephone Company at Dawson, Minnesota.

Minnesota had fewer farms with telephones in 1950 than thirty years before in 1920, Senator Humphrey revealed.

The 1920 census showed 110,569 farms in Minnesota, or 62% of the total, had telephone service -- compared to only 107,359 farms, or 59.9 percent of the total shown with telephones in the 1950 census, Senator Humphrey said.

Congratulating the Farmers Mutual for its enterprise in "bringing this essential service to farmers", Senator Humphrey said concerted efforts are needed to bring modern communication facilities to all farms of the country.

"Farmers need phones for more efficient farm operation and production, and they need them for efficient marketing," he said. "Every farm is a real factory in production of food and fiber -- how many other types of factories would think of getting along without telephones?"

But telephones can make an even more important contribution to "fuller, richer, rural life," Senator Humphrey said.

"Families need telephones for contact with the neighbors, their school, their church -- they need them to insure the health and safety

of their loved ones, and for a decent social life".

Emphasizing that government credit, available to private companies and farmers' cooperatives alike, is necessary for expansion of rural telephone service, Senator Humphrey declared he had urged the Senate Appropriations Committee to increase the administration's proposal authorizing only \$50,000,000 for rural telephone loans through the REA during the coming fiscal year.

"We already have a backlog of nearly \$100 million in loan applications now on file -- \$5,464,545 of them from Minnesota," Senator Humphrey said.

"If adequate loan funds aren't approved, we're not going to reverse the backward trend of rural phone service in America."

Senator Humphrey revealed that the REA, since authorizing of the rural telephone program in 1949, had extended loans amounting to \$6,911,000 to 16 firms for rural telephone service in Minnesota, of which the Farmers Mutual Company was the first to get necessary funds for reorganizing and rehabilitating its system for greater rural coverage, and the first to provide modern rural dial service.

"For the country as a whole", Senator Humphrey said, "60% of the farmers or over 3,300,000 families, have no phones at all, and out of the remaining two million farmers with telephone service, perhaps one half are inadequate and antiquated -- of the 'whoop and holler' type."

"What REA has done to electrify American agriculture, it can do to bring modern communication to the farmer, if free enterprise and the government will work together to best serve the needs of all," Senator Humphrey said.

Senator:

Dawson newspaper and radio

Minneapolis Tribune - Rolf Felstad
Jack MacDonald

Minneapolis Star - Gene Newhall
Wallace Mitchill

Duluth - City Desk

AP - Minnesota

UP - Minnesota

WTCN, KSTP, WCCO

*Sent airmail
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