

Frank Edwards' tape -- two minutes

Sept 53

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You can take it from me, Minnesota's farmers are seriously

concerned about what is happening to our agricultural economy. They are concerned about what is going to be done to protect that economy, and what is going to happen to the farm programs that have built the strength in that economy during the past decade. I know! I have talked to and with at least 100,000 farmers since Congress took its recess at the start of August.

I have made it my business to go out among the farmers, and hear what they have to say. I have visited more than 75 rural communities and farm trading centers in Minnesota, talking with businessmen as well as farmers. Make no mistake about it -- the Main Street merchants are just as insistent as farmers that Congress end this period of confusion and uncertainty by extending and improving the farm price support program at adequately high levels at the forthcoming session of Congress.

Talk about "free markets" and "flexible supports" is being

met with scorn by farmers who know it is just a fancy way of saying, 'let's toss agriculture to the wolves once more'. It's happened too often in the past. We're not going to let it happen again. We can't let it happen -- for the sake of the entire economy not just for the sake of agriculture alone.

The farmer's outcry is beginning to make itself heard.

Those of us who have been raising our voices in behalf of the farmers' plight in the present cost-price squeeze ever since last January are glad to see that at least even Secretary of Agriculture Benson seems to be showing a little concern -- at least political concern. But it will take more than nice words to stabilize our markets. It will take constructive action, and positive evidence that the Administration is really concerned with farmers -- not with food speculators and brokers. That evidence is yet to be produced, as far as I am concerned.



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