

RADIO SCRIPT --- THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 1957

This is Senator Hubert Humphrey speaking...

All of us, I am sure, want to see our abundance of food
and fiber used more wisely to serve human needs.

Two events occurred here in the nation's capitol last week
to focus attention on the opportunities our ^{food} abundance can provide for
constructive uses both at home and abroad.

On the domestic side, most of us in Congress were shocked
to learn that there is no school lunch program in the elementary
schools of the District of Columbia -- and that the District's
welfare agencies make no use of the surplus food commodities available
through the Department of Agriculture. Yet at the same time ^{it is now revealed} hundreds
of youngsters are undernourished and actually going hungry.

It certainly seems incredible ^{that} for such a situation ^{could} exist
within the shadow of the ~~capitol~~ ^{The Nation's Capital} dome of a ~~great country like ours.~~
Fortunately, it looks as if something is going to be done about it.

After I called this situation to the attention of Congress, on the basis of a survey conducted by a leading Washington newspaper showing the hunger which existed among children because they simply were not getting enough food, the Senate's District Committee complied with my request to conduct a full investigation. As soon as the investigation was announced, the District school officials decided to start at least a temporary emergency school lunch program. It certainly should be made permanent. In other areas, the school lunch program and the surplus food distribution program through welfare agencies are outstanding examples of the constructive use to which surplus products can be diverted without interfering with private business.

But our food and fiber abundance offers even greater opportunities, in implementing our international policies. —

*Walter
P. Reuther*

Also in Washington last week, our Senate Agriculture Committee, on my motion, extended for another year Public Law 480 under which we sell farm commodities abroad for foreign currencies. Under this program we have not only obtained a huge increase in our exports

of agricultural commodities, but have also, in effect, used food instead of dollars for carrying on a good share of our foreign development and military support programs. That is done by using the foreign currencies obtained for such purposes.

For example, the Defense Department informs me that \$241 million of the money obtained from sale of farm commodities abroad has been earmarked for "common defense" activities in Brazil, Formosa, Iran, Korea, Peru, Pakistan, and Yugoslavia. Another \$42 million has been set aside for building better military family housing for our forces stationed in foreign countries. An addition \$478 million has been earmarked for paying United States obligations abroad, and a total of one billion, 111 million is being used for loans for multilateral trade and economic development. Other uses of these funds include assistance to American-sponsored schools, libraries, and community centers, financing the international educational exchange, and translation of American books and periodicals into other languages for distribution abroad.

For years I have been encouraging this approach, and want to see more of it done. It not only helps our own farmers, it enables us to expand our worthwhile assistance programs without extra costs.

Unfortunately, many people think of our farm surplus disposal program as just writing off a big-loss --- when actually we are making important uses of the foreign currencies received. Without them, we would have to be spending more American dollars.

These uses serve all the American people, and should not be regarded as just costs or losses of the farm program.

In order to bring about better understanding of this program, and to seek to improve and expand it in any way possible, the Senate Agriculture Committee has authorized me to hold comprehensive hearings into this use of our farm commodities later this spring. While I am doing so, I hope to be able to encourage similar greater use of our farm commodities in bartering for strategic materials

from other areas of the world. Recently, I have learned, our government that has appeared so worried about the farm surplus declined a chance to trade substantial quantities for platinum -- on the grounds we had no immediate need for more platinum. Now, any mineral as valuable as platinum -- more valuable than gold -- is certainly a sound investment in our government's stockpile -- and far cheaper to store than food. It certainly is not perishable.

If we can convert, through barter, our excess farm abundance into such valuable materials, I am convinced we should do so at every opportunity. I am hopeful we can get this done.

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~~We~~ have just completed a session at which we agreed on a minimum bill--a bill which would ~~retain~~ ^{set} a 51 million acre base for the program for this year instead of 37 million acres, leaving the support level where the Secretary has already announced it. ^{price} But recognizing that farmers want to look farther ahead, our bill will call upon the Secretary of Agriculture to immediately undertake a

complete study of the over-all feed grain situation, and submit its findings together with his recommendations for a more effective program applying to all feed grains for 1958 to Congress by June 15.

Because it was concern over other feed grains that blocked House action, I'm hopeful that such a start toward the 1958 program this year will help us win approval of the new corn bill quickly.

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Our/Senate committee will vote Monday morning on our new proposal, a bipartisan proposal from the midwest on which Senator Thye and I have worked together.

It certainly doesn't provide all that I think our corn growers are entitled to, but it appears to have the best chance of approval of any of the alternatives we considered.

If Congress approves our new measure, we ~~can't expect to~~ ^{will} not ~~only~~ only have a 51 million acre base for the corn program in 1957 but commence work on the 1958 this summer instead of again waiting until the start of 1958. In that way, farmers will know this winter what conditions they face in 1958--instead of once again going through such a period of uncertainty as has developed during the past year.



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