

SOMEBODY NEEDS TO CARE

Address prepared for delivery by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) at Annual Convention of the National Farmers Union, Springfield, Illinois, March 17, 1959.

It is an honor and a pleasure to be here in the Midwest today with you Farmers Union folk. I think that you all know that I consider the family farmers as the very bedrock of American democracy.

It is a special honor and pleasure to be on the platform with your president, Jim Patton. From where I sit in Washington, I have had ample opportunity to judge the effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, of spokesmen for American agriculture. And I want you all to know that no witness who has appeared before us carries more weight and influence or has earned more respect than your Jim Patton.

Whether they agree or disagree with his views, no one in or out of Congress can successfully challenge the sincerity of Jim Patton's convictions, nor his dedication to his purpose of serving you and other family farmers of America. And, furthermore, his guidance and counsel have made a tremendous contribution toward sound liberal progress in our democracy.

And I could not pass this opportunity, today, to pay a deserved tribute to your Johnny Baker, your Washington hired hand. Many of us on Capitol Hill depend upon John's wide range of knowledge and his sagacity. We know we can always depend upon his ready, willing, and able assistance when the need arises.

You do not need me to describe for you the tragedy that has fallen upon agriculture in these recent years. No one in all the world knows better than you do.

You have been there, where it happened.

No one foresaw more clearly and more sharply than you in the Farmers Union the consequences which have followed from the errors of the past six years.

You saw it coming. You saw it come. You have suffered under its blows.

You know more certainly than any one else in the world that the farmers' incomes have eroded away steadily and dangerously, while the farmers' costs have climbed.

You know more surely than anyone that our farm programs have been wrecked, piece by piece, during these six years, until now the very concept of a national farm program has been made almost disreputable in the public mind.

The principle of a national farm program has been crushed under a burden of senseless, purposeless costs, by a record of clumsy, wrong-minded administration. Because you have so nobly understood the purposes of the farm programs of the New Deal, you have been hurt more cruelly than anyone to see them wrecked -- you have been hurt in your hearts, as well as in the material way that all farmers have been hurt.

You know also the bitter, shameful waste of our nation's great opportunity to use its food for building peace which these past six years have brought. You have suffered in your souls to hear the denunciation of "burdensome surpluses"; it is an affront to the justified pride you take in the noble work of producing food. It is an affront to the compassion that decent people must feel for the hunger of millions and millions of human beings who do not have enough; it is a cruel rebuke to the dream you have, that you share with all men of good will on earth, that our generation might leave to our children a world of peace and progress and prosperity.

Why, we have not even had the imagination and compassion needed to feed our own hungry neighbors, right here in the richest country in all history!

There are little children so hungry they can not keep up with their school work literally within a stone's throw of the offices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, where Ezra Taft Benson sits on top of a nine-billion dollar mountain of surpluses! There are hundreds of children in the District of Columbia who suffer from a disease that the medical men call "malnutrition", who can not learn, who can not grow properly, who can not fight off the attacks of other diseases, because they do not get enough to eat!

You know, better than any expert in agricultural statistics can ever know, the dark despair of young couples on the farm who are laboring under the heavy burden of debt that beginning farmers so often face, as their incomes sink lower and lower and their costs rise up and up.

You know at first hand how the farmer committee system has been demoralized and shattered.

You know that the Secretary of Agriculture has become the czar over the Rural Electrification Administration, that he has seized the authority of the Administrator of that program and invested it in an appointee who sits under his eyes and under his thumb.

I have re-introduced a bill that would give back to the Administrator of REA the full authority and loan-making powers he is supposed to have, and always did have before this Administration took over. And, I promise you today, we are going to put the Humphrey-Price bill into law.

You know the wrongness and the injustice of the latest attack that has been leveled against the farmers REA co-ops, in the form of a demand that they pay higher interest rates.

You may not fully realize how shockingly unjust and selfish it is, because the facts do not receive much publicity.

You may not know, for example, that since this tight-money, high-interest-rate administration took power, its policies have resulted in a 62 percent gain in annual income for the people who receive interest! This is far, far greater than any gain in income received by any other group in our economy. It is a revealing contrast to what has happened to farmers' incomes.

The Administration now says that the farmers should pay higher interest rates on their REA loans to help the government carry the mounting costs of carrying the government debt. They leave unsaid the fact that it is this Administration's support for the money-lenders that is primarily responsible for boosting the cost of interest on the debt, until it has become the biggest single item in the federal budget aside from defense. About 11 cents of every tax dollar now goes for interest.

Here is the full story of how much the American taxpayers have been burdened by the high-interest, tight money policy of supporting the collectors of interest in our economy. In 1952, the interest on the federal debt was only \$5.8 billion. In the budget now before Congress it is \$8.1 billion -- and that probably will not be enough!

This is an increase of \$2.3 billion in interest costs that the taxpayers must pay every year! Do you know how much \$2.3 billion is? Well, here is one way of putting it: It is just about as much, every year, as the grand total that all the REA coops in the country have borrowed from the government in all the 24 years since REA was created in 1935.

Now the White House is trying to put the bite on the farmers' coops to help balance its budget. After wrecking the government farm programs, they want to handicap the farmers' self-help associations by making co-ops pay taxes on the refunds that they give to their patrons.

At least, we should not be surprised by this latest attack on the co-ops. The country had full advance warning when the Washington

lobbyist for the co-op hating NTEA was given a job on the President's White House staff. Yes, we saw it coming, and come it did!

If the Administration were really sincere about wanting to balance the budget, it might take a look at some of the really big loop-holes in the corporation tax laws instead of picking on the farmers.

An investment adviser told the Senate Anti-Trust and Monopoly Subcommittee last week that Uncle Sam has lost \$46 billion in tax revenue in the past seven years through loop-holes in the corporation tax laws! Most of those loopholes were put there by the Republican 83rd Congress -- at the specific request of the Eisenhower Administration. And they would have been even wider, if we had not fought to squeeze them shut in Congress, against fervent Administration pressure.

Yes, you in the Farmers Union know about these things. You know the full measure of the injustice to farm families, the senseless waste of wealth and national opportunity, that the past six years have brought.

And it was very substantially because you know these things so well -- you Democrats and Republicans alike in the Farmers Union -- that my party received such an overwhelming mandate from the farm belt states in the Congressional and Senatorial elections last fall. I give a big share of the credit for the Democratic election victory to the leadership and the brilliant educational work of the Farmers Union in the farm communities of the West and Midwest.

The Democratic Party has received a powerful mandate from the farm people of America to oppose the tragic wrongs that have been done to American agriculture under the Eisenhower Administration.

We must honor that mandate from farm people. We are determined to develop a new and better farm bill. We will need -- and welcome -- your help. We believe we can pass it -- and make it stick -- veto or no veto. If we can not make it stick the first time, we will pass another, and we will keep on until we do make it stick.

But it is only fair to warn you that the Democratic Congress is working under extremely serious and inescapable limitations. We can not do everything you would wish we would do. We can not do everything we want to do.

First, we are working under the limits imposed by the President's veto power. I think it is only fair and accurate to expect that the President will veto any bill we might pass which will do anything substantial to raise farm prices.

This means that Congress is limited in what it can do for farmers to what can be passed by a two-thirds vote -- over a Presidential veto.

Secondly, Congress is limited in what it can do for farmers by the veto-power-by-administration which is held by the Secretary of Agriculture.

You have seen how good farm programs can be ruined by unsympathetic administration. The power of the Secretary of Agriculture to negate the intent and spirit of Congress is great.

The Secretary's power to veto by administrative action limits the good that Congress can do for farmers to those things that are so simple, so direct, that the results can come through to the farm in spite of all the negativism, foot-dragging and hostility that it will encounter as it passes through the Department of Agriculture's hands.

Despite these terribly severe handicaps, at least some of us in the Democratic Congress are determined to pass a bill that will help the farmers of America.

And you can mark it down as absolutely certain that the Democratic Congress will not let the Administration pull down the temple of agricultural programs completely in its final hours, as it has proposed and wishes to do.

The Democratic Congress will never, never, never give Ezra Taft Benson the Zero-Parity floor he has asked for. We will not give him the market-place no-parity gimmick he has asked for either.

The Democratic Congress will not yield even the "next step" of another 15 point cut in support floors, from 75 percent of parity down to 60 percent, that the Eisenhower Administration has requested as its "second-best" objective.

The Democratic Congress will not allow the Administration to get away with putting a penalty tax on the refunds that your cooperatives pay to their patrons.

The Democratic Congress will not let the Administration jack up REA interest rates, nor throw the REA co-ops to the wolves of Wall Street.

You can count on that. You can bank on it. You can bet your economic lives on it -- and that is exactly what the stakes are in agricultural policy today. For while the Administration has a powerful veto weapon to use against Congress when it tries to help the farmer, we have a veto power of our own when it comes to acting on the Administration's plans to harm the farmers. And we will use it! We will not give up a single inch.

This tragic era for agriculture -- the dark era of Ezra -- has had a good and constructive result along with all the misery and waste. So it seems to me, at any rate.

It has made us grow up and come of age in our thinking about farm policy.

We now realize that the real argument in farm policy should not be over methods and details. The real argument is over basic objectives.

Are you for a program to help the family farm? Or are you against the family farm? That, my friends, is the real issue, the real dividing line, in farm policy debate today.

Almost any farmer in America can think up the general outline of a farm plan that will work -- if there is a will to make it work.

Methods are important. Details are important. Some will work better than others. Some well-intentioned ideas might not work at all. We need highly-skilled technical experts and conscientious administration to carry out our farm programs. But our trouble is not for lack of ideas and conscientious, skilled people to put them into effect. The Department of Agriculture is overflowing with fine, dedicated public servants -- who could make a farm program work and work well, if they were given a chance.

What we lack in Washington today is a positive will to help the farmers.

There was a time not so long ago when we took it for granted that one of the bed-rock principles of American life was the rightness of cooperation by the public to protect and improve farmers' incomes. Unhappily, this is not so today.

The most damaging product of the Age of Ezra is the dangerous erosion of America's will to do justice for her farm people.

For the first time in the history of our nation, a cancer of doubt has arisen in the public consciousness as to the merit of our family farming system.

The swift rise of vertical integration provides the mechanism whereby big concentrated business and financial interests can extend their domination over agriculture. This mechanism will leave the farm family on the farm. But it will take away its economic independence. The farmer will be told what to grow and where to sell, and the vertical integrator will control what the farmer gets for his efforts.

Let me read to you what the Department of Agriculture's experts foresee in this emerging new system of agricultural domination. This is from a report published recently by the Department:

"Vertical integration may vitally affect the role of the farmers ... Contract arrangements may leave producers with little more than general land management and caretaker functions ... Livestock production contracts vary from arrangements involving control of only a few decisions to contracts virtually relegating the producer to a pieceworker role."

This ominous forecast for American agriculture holds a powerful, fascinating allure for all too many people in our country today. Its allure has been heightened immeasurably by the discouraging, demoralizing shambles that the Eisenhower Administration has made of our farm programs. There is a growing sentiment in our country for just giving up on the farm problem.

This sentiment is strong among those who do not understand the tremendous values and strengths in our family farming system, nor the unusual problems which farm families must face. There are millions and millions of citizens in our population who are far removed from the soil. Their number is increasing year by year. Domination of agriculture by centralized corporate power appeals to many of them as an easy way out of the farm problem.

And it appeals even more strongly to those who simply do not care about what happens to farm people.

The most serious problem farmers face is the growing strength of the public sentiment that either does not know, or does not care, about the value to our national life of preserving the independently-owned, owner-operated, family-sized farm system of agriculture.

I would be less than honest with you if I did not admit that even in the Democratic party, there are some who do not appreciate the value of preserving our family farm pattern against the growing domination of centralized economic interests.

The persistent discrediting of farm programs that has gone on during the past six years has resulted in some degree in discrediting farmers themselves by implication. Remember, farmers have had no one in the President's Cabinet to plead their case to the public. With no national voice to speak out in their behalf, it is becoming harder and harder to maintain a sympathetic understanding of the farmers' unusual economic problems among the increasing urban majority of our people.

There is no single thing more critically important to the future of the family farm than having a national spokesman in the national administration who can and will stick up for the farmers and explain their problems to the people.

Until six years ago, farmers had an understanding and loyal champion right in the White House. The world's most famous "retired farmer" of Independence, Missouri, was then on the job. There is no better place to have a friend who understands your problems than right in the White House.

Not only farmers, but the entire nation, need a man in the White House who has understanding of and sympathy for farmers.

The vast majority of people in the other countries of the world are farmers, and their problems, while different from ours, are important to all of us who look forward to a time of true peace in the world.

Today we realize more keenly than ever the need to find peaceful ways of reaching into the lives of other people.

I want to talk to you about the international situation as well as the domestic situation, for we face a grave challenge which can not be ignored.

That challenge can best be met by proving we really care about people, at home or abroad, and care about progress -- and most of all about peace with justice.

Whenever we neglect our own people, we have little to offer to the rest of the world in asking vast millions to rally to our banner of freedom and democracy.

We must prove we care at home -- and then prove we care also about our fellow human beings everywhere.

Last night, the President of the United States talked to his countrymen and to the world of this latest Soviet-precipitated crisis over Berlin. Even as we demonstrate to the world that we are utterly determined to resist Communist aggression, we must be alert to the opportunities to wage peace -- consistently, vigorously, and dramatically.

We must constantly seek to express the American dedication to people, peace, and progress throughout the world -- not only in the words of peace, but in the very deeds and works of peace.

You people here, and others like you throughout the country, are producers of what can be one of the greatest assets our country has in its all-out competition with Soviet Russia -- a force for freedom and peace more far-reaching than any military weapon.

Food is the common denominator of international life. Man must eat to survive. It may well be that bread, not guns, will decide mankind's future destiny.

In areas of Africa and Asia, as well as other parts of the world, food means far more to vast millions of people today than anything else.

A breakthrough in the conquest of hunger could be more significant in the cold war than the conquest of outer space.

Thanks to you farm people, and others like you, the United States is today in a far better position than Russia to lead the world toward the conquest of hunger and want.

Our much-abused abundance is a tremendously vital asset to our international relations, if we have the vision and determination to use it wisely for humanity.

For years, as you know, I have been seeking to have America capitalize on what I regard as one of the most significant laws currently on our statute books.

I refer to the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act -- Public Law 480. Under this law, from the sale of American crops there becomes available to us for use in foreign countries for re-loan and reinvestment hundreds of millions of dollars in the form of foreign "counterpart" currencies.

These currencies represent one of the great assets of the free world. No other nation has such a rich resource -- well over two and one-half billion dollars of idle funds.

It is an asset which should be put to work, instead of lying fallow in State Central Banks.

It is an asset which should be used today -- now -- for investment and research instead of allowing inflation gradually to erode its purchasing power.

Out of my recent trip to western Europe, I have developed a series of recommendations for expanding the specific use of such funds. My goal is to use food for peace, food to nourish, to link nations in friendship, food to fulfill the Biblical mandate, "to feed the hungry and heal the sick".

This leads me to my principal recommendation of this afternoon. Within a very brief time, I shall introduce in the United States Senate a "Food for Peace Act". This Act has already gained the support of other Democratic Senators who are in total agreement with me that our agricultural abundance should be used as a more effective arm of our international relations.

The Food for Peace Act will redirect the emphasis of Public Law 480 more toward foreign policy objectives which serve the interests of the entire nation, rather than its present handling as a temporary farm surplus disposal program.

This will be a blue-print for a long-term food policy, to be substituted for our present year-to-year thinking and inadequate planning. By this Act we shall announce boldly to the developing areas of the world that we are going to use food as a positive force in building a peaceful world.

Regrettably, the American people have been led to think our abundance and ability to produce in abundance is some shameful millstone around our necks -- instead of perhaps one of the greatest advantages we hold on the world scene.

From the President on down, no one high in our government has seemed to realize what a potential force for freedom we have in the very thing many have complained so loudly about -- our food abundance.

Every move to make greater use of food and fiber to bolster ties with underdeveloped areas of the world has had to be forced upon this Administration.

They are too timid, and too unimaginative. They are hesitant when they should be bold. They have once again sent recommendations to the Congress that are either impossible or almost intangible.

"The Food for Peace Act" will call for the creation of a special agency attached to the White House, headed by a Peace Food Administrator appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

During the war, we created a new post of War Food Administrator, entirely independent of the Secretary of Agriculture, because we fully recognized the importance of food to victory. In our current struggle for a secure peace in the world, it is no less important to have in our government a top-level official whose full responsibility shall be the more effective use of our abundance of food and fiber, in the nation's interests, as a vital arm of our foreign policy.

The Peace Food Administrator should be someone with a vision of what our food can mean to the world, and someone with the ability and boldness to end buck-passing and conflict between the many agencies of government involved one way or another in food use abroad.

We shall transfer the administration of Public Law 480 out of the Department of Agriculture and the administration of the appropriate part of the Mutual Security Act out of the State Department and place them under the new Peace Food Administrator, along with existing units in the departments working in this field.

A Peace Food Policy Committee whose members are high level representatives of all the departments concerned shall advise and consult with the Peace Food Administrator.

In addition, the Administrator will have the benefit of the counsel of a special advisory committee made up of representatives of the major farm organizations, food and fiber exporters, representatives of the voluntary agencies such as CARE and church groups, and representatives of voluntary health groups.

Public Law 480 will be extended for five years, with an authorized program level of \$10 billion for the five-year period.

We shall tell the new nations that we are going to "back stop" them in their plans to industrialize, and to improve their economies by way of long-term loans for purchase of United States abundant foods. We are not going to stand idly by and watch them tighten their already pinched belts by cutting down on food imports at the time when they need still larger imports. We know that they are trying to conserve their limited amounts of capital in order to wisely and prudently expand their productive base.

We shall through the Peace Food Administration cooperate with other member-nations of the United Nations to establish national food reserves in food deficit areas, contributing specified amounts of existing CCC holdings.

Because most of the people of the world are hungry for fats, we will channel edible oils by donation into any of the international programs such as national food reserve, the United Nations Development Fund, or our own bi-lateral relief feeding programs.

We shall see that the foreign currencies resulting from Title I sales shall be used to promote both vocational and general education in the countries concerned.

We shall see that such funds are used upon request to pay for increased FAO technical assistance in conducting nutrition research and surveys, and carrying on programs that feed the hungry, and in training local people needed to manage these programs.

Through the Peace Food Administration we can work out plans to support the FAO's projected "Free the World from Hunger Campaign"; to find the means to aid in overseas school lunch campaigns, summer camp programs, and milk feeding programs.

Through the Peace Food Administration we can move swiftly when famine or disaster strike, bringing aid to those sorely in need.

Through this projected agency, we can sit down together with representatives of other exporting nations and make sure that we are working toward the common good. We can work with representatives of those countries whose people are in need, and plan the best ways of supplying the need. If we can write mutual defense agreements with some 45 nations of the world to check military aggression, surely we can write mutual food agreements designed to check hunger and malnutrition.

I firmly believe that a Peace Food Administration operating for these purposes and along these general lines, would open new doors of opportunity for our own hard pressed farm people, and new doors of opportunity toward building a peaceful world.

It offers us a dramatic way to show the world we care more about people living, than people dying.

We need far less talk that portrays us as a bellicose and belligerent people, and much more emphasis on the "works of peace" -- emphasis on programs and policies that are aimed at better living for people everywhere.

The world is weary of war, and threats of war.

The people of this world want someone to help them on the path of helping themselves, rather than someone to frighten them.

What the world needs is hope and promise, not fear and tragedy.

What the world needs is more leaders who really care about people.

St. Patrick's Day

Carl Rowan

SOMEBODY NEEDS TO CARE

000460

Jim Patton

Ed Christenson

Sen Douglas

Sen Symington

Address prepared for delivery by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) at Annual Convention of the National Farmers Union, Springfield, Illinois, March 17, 1959.

Chas Brannan

Miss Heider

It is an honor and a pleasure to be here in the Midwest

today with ^{the} Farmers Union ~~for~~. I think that you all know

that I consider the family farmers as the very bedrock of

American democracy.

It is a special honor and pleasure to be on the

platform with your President, Jim Patton. From where I sit

in Washington, I have had ample opportunity to judge the

effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, of spokesmen for

American agriculture. And I want you all to know that no

witness who has appeared before us carries more weight and

influence or has earned more respect than your Jim Patton.

Whether they agree or disagree with his views, no one

in or out of Congress can successfully challenge the sincerity

Agree or Disagree

Democ
Jim Rowan
Joe Russell
State Sen

Jim
Patton

000461

of Jim Patton's convictions, nor his dedication to his
purpose of serving you and other family farmers of America.

And furthermore, his guidance and counsel have made a
tremendous contribution toward sound liberal progress in
our democracy.

Johnny Baker
Huskins
L And I could not pass this opportunity, today, to
pay a deserved tribute to your Johnny Baker, your Washington
hired hand. Many of us on Capitol Hill depend upon John's
wide range of knowledge and his ^{judgment} ~~ability~~. We know we
can always depend upon his ready, willing, and able assis-
tance when the need arises.

Starts
L You do not need me to describe for you the tragedy
that has fallen upon agriculture in these recent years. No
one in all the world knows better than you do.

L You have been there, where it happened.

No one foresaw more clearly and more sharply than you

in the Farmers Union the consequences which have followed
from the errors of the past six years.

L You saw it coming. You saw it come. You have
suffered under its blows.

*Farm Income
down*
*costs
up!*
L You know more certainly than any one else in the world
that the farmers' incomes have ^{been} eroded away steadily and dan-
gerously, while the farmers' costs have climbed.

L You know more surely than anyone that our farm programs
have been wrecked, piece by piece, during these six years,
until now the very concept of a national farm program has
been made almost disreputable in the public mind.

*Natl
Farm
Prog* }
L The principle of a national farm program has been
crushed under a burden of senseless, purposeless costs, by a
record of clumsy, wrong-minded administration. Because you
have so nobly understood the purposes of the farm programs
of the New Deal, you have been hurt more cruelly than anyone

to see them wrecked -- you have been hurt in your hearts,
as well as in the material way that all farmers have been
~~hurt~~ *injured*.

L You know also the bitter, shameful waste of our
nation's great opportunity to use its food for building
peace ~~which~~ *during* these past six years, ~~have brought~~. You have
suffered in your souls to hear the denunciation of "burden-
some surpluses"; it is an affront to the justified pride
you take in the noble work of producing food. It is an
affront to the compassion that decent people must feel for
the hunger of millions and millions of human beings ~~who do~~ *in the far*
distant places;
~~not have enough~~; it is a cruel rebuke to the dream you have,
that you share with all men of good will on earth, that our
generation might leave to our children a world of peace and
progress and prosperity.

L ~~Why we have not even had the~~ *mind you, there has not been the*
imagination and compassion

needed to feed our own hungry ~~neighbors~~ ^{people}, right here in

the richest country in all history!

even the school children of Wash D.C.

Yes There are little children so hungry they can not keep up with their schoolwork literally within a stone's throw of

the offices of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Washington,

where ~~Secretary~~ ^{Secretary} Benson sits on top of a nine-billion dollar

mountain of surpluses! There are hundreds of children in

the District of Columbia who suffer from a disease that the

medical men call "malnutrition", who can not learn, who can

not grow properly, who can not fight off the attacks of other

diseases, because they do not get enough to eat!

2 You know, better than any expert in agricultural

statistics can ever know, the dark despair of young couples

on the farm who are laboring under the heavy burden of debt

that beginning farmers so often face, as their incomes sink

lower and lower and their costs rise up and up.

L You know at first hand how the farmer committee
system has been demoralized and shattered.

L You know that the Secretary of Agriculture has become
the czar over the Rural Electrification Administration,
that he has seized the authority of the Administrator of
that program and invested it in an appointee who sits under
his eyes and under his thumb.

L I have re-introduced a bill that would give back to
the Administrator of REA the full authority and loan-making
powers he is supposed to have, and always did have before
this Administration took over. And, I promise you today,
in congress are going to pass
we ~~are going to pass~~ the Humphrey-Price bill ~~into law.~~

L You know the wrongness and the injustice of the latest
attack that has been leveled against the farmers REA co-ops,
in the form of a demand that they pay higher interest rates.

L You may not fully realize how shockingly unjust and selfish it is, because the facts do not receive much publicity.

Hi Interest
Trickle Down Econ -
Perverts up Hickies

L You may not know, for example, that since this tight-money, high-interest-rate administration took power, its policies have resulted in a 62 percent gain in annual income for the people who receive interest! This is far, far greater than any gain in income received by any other group in our economy. It is a revealing contrast to what has happened to farmers' incomes.

L The Administration now says that the farmers should pay higher interest rates on their REA loans to help the government carry the mounting costs of carrying the government debt.

L They leave unsaid the fact that it is this Administration's support for the money-lenders that is primarily responsible for boosting the cost of interest on the debt, until it has become the biggest single item in the federal budget aside from

000467

defense. About 11 cents of every tax dollar now goes for
interest. — \$8 Billion & more

Here is the full story of how much the American
taxpayers have been burdened by the high-interest, tight
money policy of supporting the collectors of interest in
our economy. In 1952, the interest on the federal debt was
only \$5.8 billion. In the budget now before Congress it is
\$8.1 billion -- and that probably will not be enough!

This is an increase of \$2.3 billion in interest costs
that the taxpayers must pay every year! Do you know how much
\$2.3 billion is? Well, here is one way of putting it: It
is just about as much, every year, as the grand total that
all the REA coops in the country have borrowed from the
government in all the 24 years since REA was created in 1935.

Now the White House is trying to put the bite on the
farmers' coops to help balance its budget. After wrecking

000468

the government farm programs, they want to handicap the farmers' self-help associations by making coops pay taxes on the refunds that they give to their patrons.

At least, we should not be surprised by this latest attack on the co-ops. The country had full advance warning when the Washington lobbyist for the co-op hating NITEL was given a job on the President's White House staff. Yes, we saw it coming, and come it did!

If the Administration were really sincere about wanting to balance the budget, it might take a look at some of the really big loop-holes in the corporation tax laws instead of picking on the farmers.

An investment adviser told the Senate Anti-Trust and Monopoly Subcommittee last week that Uncle Sam has lost \$46 billion in tax revenue in the past seven years through loop-holes in the corporation tax laws! Most of those loopholes

000469

were put there by the Republican 83rd Congress -- at the

specific request of the Eisenhower Administration. And

they would have been even wider, if we had not fought to

squeeze them shut in Congress, against fervent Administration

pressure.

I voted against that tax law!

h Yes, you in the Farmers Union know about these things.

You know the full measure of the injustice to farm families,

the senseless waste of wealth and national opportunity, that

the past six years have brought.

h And it was very substantially because you know these things so well -- you Democrats and Republicans alike in the

Farmers Union -- that my party received such an overwhelming

mandate from the farm belt states in the Congressional and

Senatorial elections last fall. I give a big share of the

credit for the Democratic election victory to the leadership

and the brilliant educational work of the Farmers Union in the

farm communities of the West and Midwest.

✓ The Democratic Party has received a powerful mandate from the farm people of America to oppose the tragic wrongs that have been done to American agriculture under the *Republican* Eisenhower Administration.

✓ We must honor that mandate from farm people. We are determined to develop a new and better farm bill. We will need -- and welcome -- your help. We believe we can pass it -- and make it stick -- veto or no veto. If we can not make it stick the first time, we will pass another, and we will keep on until we do make it stick.

✓ But it is only fair to warn you that the Democratic Congress is working under extremely serious and inescapable limitations. We can not do everything you would wish we would do. We can not do everything we want to do.

First, we are working under the limits imposed by the President's Veto power. ~~I think~~ it is only fair and accurate to expect that the President will veto any bill we might pass which will do anything substantial to raise farm prices.

This means that Congress is limited in what it can do for farmers to what can be passed by a two-thirds vote -- over a Presidential veto.

Secondly, Congress is limited in what it can do for farmers by the veto-power-by-administration which is held by the Secretary of Agriculture.

You have seen how good farm programs can be ruined by unsympathetic administration. The power of the Secretary of Agriculture to negate the intent and spirit of Congress is great.

The Secretary's power to veto by administrative action

limits the good that Congress can do for farmers to those things that are so simple, so direct, that the results can come through to the farm in spite of all the negativism, foot-dragging and hostility that it will encounter as it passes through the Department of Agriculture's hands.

↳ Despite these terribly severe handicaps, at least some of us in the Democratic Congress are determined to pass a bill that will help the farmers of America.

↳ And you can mark it down as absolutely certain that the Democratic Congress will not let the Administration ^{in its final hours} pull down the temple of agricultural programs completely ~~in its final hours~~, as it has proposed and wishes to do.

↳ The Democratic Congress will never, never, never give ~~Secretary Benson~~ Benson the Zero-Parity floor he has asked for. We will not give him the market-place no-parity gimmick he has asked for either.

000473

✓ The Democratic Congress will not yield even the "next step" of another 15 point cut in support floors, from 75 percent of parity down to 60 percent, that the Eisenhower Administration has requested as its "second-best" objective.

✓ The Democratic Congress will not allow the Administration to get away with putting a penalty tax on the refunds that your cooperatives pay to their patrons.

✓ The Democratic Congress will not let the Administration jack up REA interest rates, nor throw the REA co-ops to the wolves of Wall Street.

✓ You can count on that. You can bank on it. You can bet your economic lives on it -- and that is exactly what the stakes are in agricultural policy today. For while the Administration has a powerful veto weapon to use against Congress when it tries to help the farmer, we have a veto power of our own when it comes to acting on the Administration's

000474

plans to harm the farmers. And we will use it! We will
not give up a single inch.

↳ This tragic era for agriculture -- ~~the dark era of~~
~~the~~ -- has had a good and constructive result along with
all the misery and waste. So it seems to me, at any rate.

↳ It has made us grow up and come of age in our thinking
about farm policy.

↳ We now realize that the real argument in farm policy
should not be over methods and details. The real argument
is over basic objectives.

Are you for a program to help the family farm? Or
are you against the family farm? That, my friends, is the
real issue, the real dividing line, in farm policy debate
today.

↳ Almost any farmer in America can think up the general
outline of a farm plan that will work -- if there is a will to

*Here is the
issue!*

000475

make it work.

Methods are important. Details are important. Some will work better than others. Some well-intentioned ideas might not work at all. We need highly-skilled technical experts and conscientious administration to carry out our farm programs. But our trouble is not for lack of ideas and conscientious, skilled people to put them into effect.

The Department of Agriculture is overflowing with fine, dedicated public servants -- who could make a farm program work and work well, if they were given a chance.

What we lack in Washington today is a positive will to help the farmers.

There was a time not so long ago when we took it for granted that one of the bed-rock principles of American life was the rightness of cooperation by the public to protect and improve farmers' incomes. Unhappily, this is not so today.

The most damaging product of the Age of Ezra is the dangerous erosion of America's will to do justice for her farm people.

For the first time in the history of our nation, a cancer of doubt has arisen in the public consciousness as to the merit of our family farming system.

The swift rise of vertical integration provides the mechanism whereby big concentrated business and financial interests can extend their domination over agriculture.

This mechanism will leave the farm family on the farm. But it will take away its economic independence. The farmer will be told what to grow and where to sell, and the vertical integrator will control what the farmer gets for his efforts.

Let me read to you what the Department of Agriculture's experts foresee in this emerging new system of agricultural domination. This is from a report published recently by the

000477

Department:

L "Vertical integration may vitaly affect the role of the farmers...Contract arrangements may leave producers with little more than general land management and caretaker functions...Livestock production contracts vary from arrangements involving control of only a few decisions to contracts virtually relegating the producer to a pieceworker role."

Steady!

L This ominous forecast for American agriculture holds a powerful, fascinating allure for all too many people in our country today. Its allure has been heightened immeasurably by the discouraging, demoralizing shambles that the Eisenhower Administration has made of our farm programs. There is a growing sentiment in our country for just giving up on the farm problem. *and turning it over to Big Business!*

L This sentiment is strong among those who do not understand

000478
the tremendous values and strengths in our family farming system, nor the unusual problems which farm families must face. There are millions and millions of citizens in our population who are far removed from the soil. Their number is increasing year by year. Domination of agriculture by centralized corporate power appeals to many of them as an easy way out of the farm problem.

And it appeals even more strongly to those who simply do not care about what happens to farm people.

The most serious problem farmers face is the growing strength of the public sentiment that either does not know, or does not care, about the value to our national life of preserving the independently owned, owner-operated family-sized farm system of agriculture.

out I would be less than honest with you if I did not admit that even in the Democratic party, there are some who do not

000 479

appreciate the value of preserving our family farm pattern
against the growing domination of centralized economic in-
terests.

Out

The persistent discrediting of farm programs that has
gone on during the past six years has resulted in some degree
in discrediting farmers themselves by implication. Remember,
farmers have had no one in the President's Cabinet to plead
their case to the public. With no national voice to speak
out in their behalf, it is becoming harder and harder to
maintain a sympathetic understanding of the farmers' unusual
economic problems among the increasing urban majority of
our people.

There is no single thing more critically important to
the future of the family farm than having a national spokesman
in the national administration who can and will ~~stand~~ ^{stand} up for
the farmers and explain their problems to the people and the government.

The Vice President, Alben Barkley, - The Presiding
officer of the Senate - Speaker Rayburn
-21-
a trio of friends of Agriculture

Until six years ago, farmers had an understanding

and loyal champion right in the White House. The world's

most famous "retired farmer" of Independence, Missouri, was

then on the job. There is no better place to have a friend

who understands your problems than right in the White House.

and
Not only farmers, but the entire nation, need a man

in the White House who has understanding of and sympathy for

farmers.

H. Rouse
The vast majority of people in the other countries

of the world are farmers, and their problems, while different

from ours, are important to all of us who look forward to a

time of true peace, in the world.

Today we realize more keenly than ever the need to find

peaceful ways of reaching into the lives of other people.

yes I want to talk to you about the international situation

as well as the domestic situation, for we face a grave challenge

which can not be ignored.

That challenge can best be met by proving we really care about people, at home or abroad, and care about progress -- and most of all about peace with justice.

(Slowly
Enthralled)

Whenever we neglect our own people, we have little to offer to the rest of the world in asking vast millions to rally to our banner of freedom and democracy.

Just

We must prove we care at home -- and then prove we care also about our fellow human beings everywhere.

Last night, the President of the United States talked to his countrymen and to the world of this latest Soviet-precipitated crisis over Berlin. Even as we demonstrate to the world that we are ~~absolutely~~ determined to resist Communist aggression, we must be alert to the opportunities to wage peace -- consistently, vigorously, and dramatically.

We must constantly seek to express the American

000482

dedication to people, peace, and progress throughout the
world -- not only in the words of peace, but in the very
deeds and works of peace.

✓ You people here, and others like you throughout the
country, are producers of what can be one of the greatest
assets our country has in its all-out competition with Soviet
Russia -- a force for freedom and peace more far-reaching than
any military weapon.

✓ Food is the common denominator of international life.

Man must eat to survive. It may well be that bread, not guns,
will decide mankind's future destiny.

✓ In areas of Africa and Asia, as well as other parts
of the world, food means far more to vast millions of people
today than anything else.

✓ A breakthrough in the conquest of hunger could be more
significant in the cold war than the conquest of outer space.

000483

Thanks to you farm people, and others like you, the United States is today in a far better position than Russia to lead the world toward the conquest of hunger and want.

Our much-abused abundance is a tremendously vital asset to our international relations, if we have the vision and determination to use it wisely for humanity.

For years, as you know, I have been seeking to have America capitalize on what I regard as one of the most significant laws currently on our statute books.

I refer to the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act -- Public Law 480. Under this law, from the sale of American crops, there becomes available to us for use in foreign countries for re-loan and reinvestment hundreds of millions of dollars in the form of foreign "counterpart" currencies.

These currencies represent one of the great assets of

First the
food, ration
hunger -
then creates
capital!

000484

the free world. No other nation has such a rich resource
-- well over two and one-half billion dollars of idle funds.

It is an asset which should be put to work, instead
of lying fallow in State Central Banks.

It is an asset which should be used today -- now --
for investment and research instead of allowing inflation
gradually to erode its purchasing power.

Out of my recent trip to western Europe, I have de-
veloped a series of recommendations for expanding the specific
use of such funds. My goal is to use food for peace, food
to nourish, to link nations in friendship, food to fulfill
the Biblical mandate, "to feed the hungry and heal the sick".

This leads me to my principal recommendation of this
afternoon. Within a very brief time, I shall introduce in the
United States Senate a "Food for Peace Act". This Act has
already gained the support of other Democratic Senators who

000485
are in total agreement with me that our agricultural
abundance should be used as a more effective arm of our
international relations.

∠ The Food for Peace Act will redirect the emphasis
of Public Law 480 more toward foreign policy objectives
which serve the interests of the entire nation, rather
than its present handling as a temporary farm surplus
disposal program.

∠ This will be a blue-print for a long-term food policy,
to be substituted for our present year-to-year thinking and
inadequate planning. By this Act we shall announce boldly
to the developing areas of the world that we are going to
use food as a positive force in building a peaceful world.

∠ Regrettably, the American people have been led to
think our abundance and ability to produce in abundance is
some shameful millstone around our necks -- instead of perhaps

one of the greatest advantages we hold on the world scene.

From the President on down, no one ~~high in our~~
~~government~~ has seemed to realize what a potential force
for freedom we have in the very thing many have complained
so loudly about -- our food abundance.

Every move to make greater use of food and fiber
to bolster ties with underdeveloped areas of the world has
had to be forced upon this Administration.

They are too timid, and too unimaginative. They
are hesitant when they should be bold. They have once
again sent recommendations to the Congress that are either
impossible or almost intangible.

"The Food for Peace Act" will call for the creation
of a special agency attached to the White House, headed by
a Peace Food Administrator appointed by the President and

confirmed by the Senate.

L During ^{World II} ~~the war~~ we created a new post of War Food Administrator, entirely independent of the Secretary of Agriculture, because we fully recognized the importance of food to victory. In our current struggle for a secure peace in the world, it is no less important to have in our government a top-level official whose full responsibility shall be the more effective use of our abundance of food and fiber, in the nation's interests, as a vital arm of our foreign policy.

L The Peace Food Administrator should be someone with a vision of what our food can mean to the world, and someone with the ability and boldness to end buck-passing and conflict between the many agencies of government involved one way or another in food use abroad.

L ^{proposed} We ~~shall~~ transfer the administration of Public Law 480

000488

out of the Department of Agriculture and the Administration
of the appropriate part of the Mutual Security Act out of
the State Department and place them under the new Peace
Food Administrator, along with existing units in the de-
partments working in this field.

A Peace Food Policy Committee whose members are high
level representatives of all the departments concerned shall
advise and consult with the Peace Food Administrator.

In addition, the Administrator will have the benefit
of the counsel of a special advisory committee made up of
representatives of the major farm organizations, food and
fiber exporters, representatives of the voluntary agencies
such as CARE and church groups, and representatives of
voluntary health groups.

Public Law 480 ^{should} ~~will~~ be extended for five years, with
an authorized program level of \$10 billion for the five-year
period.

2 We shall tell the new nations that we are going to "back stop" them in their plans to industrialize, and to improve their economies by way of long term loans for purchase of United States abundant foods. We are not going to stand idly by and watch them tighten their already pinched belts by cutting down on food imports at the time when they need still larger imports. We know that they are trying to conserve their limited amounts of capital in order to wisely and prudently expand their productive base.

2 We shall through the Peace Food Administration cooperate with other member-nations of the United Nations to establish national food reserves in food deficit areas, contributing specified amounts of existing CCC holdings.

2 Because most of the people of the world are hungry for fats, we will channel edible oils by donation into any of the international programs such as national food reserve, the United

Nations Development Fund, or our own bi-lateral relief
feeding programs.

↳ We shall see that the foreign currencies resulting
from Title I sales shall be used to promote both vocational
and general education in the countries concerned. - Educ for Peace

↳ We shall see that such funds are used upon request
to pay for increased FAO technical assistance in conducting
nutrition research and surveys, and carrying on programs
that feed the hungry, and in training local people needed
to manage these programs.

h Through the Peace Food Administration we can work out
plans to support the FAO's projected "Free the World from
Hunger Campaign"; to find the means to aid in overseas school
lunch campaigns, summer camp programs, and milk feeding programs.

↳ Through the Peace Food Administration we can move swiftly
when famine or disaster strike, bringing aid to those sorely in
need.

000491

Through this projected agency, we can sit down together with representatives of other exporting nations and make sure that we are working toward the common good. We can work with representatives of those countries whose people are in need, and plan the best ways of supplying the need. If we can write mutual defense agreements with some 45 nations of the world to check military aggression, surely we can write mutual food agreements designed to check hunger and malnutrition.

I firmly believe that a Peace Food Administration operating for these purposes and along these general lines, would open new doors of opportunity for our own hard pressed farm people, and new doors of opportunity toward building a peaceful world.

It offers us a dramatic way to show the world we care more about people living, than people dying.

000492

✓ We need far less talk that portrays us as a bellicose
and belligerent people, and much more emphasis on the "works
of peace" -- emphasis on programs and policies that are aimed
at better living for people everywhere.

✓ The world is weary of war, and threats of war.

✓ The people of this world want someone to help them
on the path of helping themselves, rather than someone to
frighten them.

✓ What the world needs is hope and promise, not fear
and tragedy.

✓ What the world needs is more leaders who really
care about people.

March 16, 1959



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org