

[Transcript.]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

TO: Miss Pennington, Press Office,
Office of the Vice President
Room G241
New Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

FROM: Willard Lamphere, Deputy Director,
Information Division

SUBJECT: Speech of the Vice President at The National Conference of
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation State
Committeemen at the U. S. Department of Agriculture,
May 19, 1967

The attached manuscript was transcribed from a tape recording of the Vice President's speech at the above conference. Since we plan to reproduce the speech for those in attendance at the conference the manuscript is submitted for editing.

An early return of the edited manuscript will be appreciated.

Willard Lamphere

Attachment

SECRETARY FREEMAN: They state here that that's a pretty good reception for a farm boy from Georgia. And this morning I can say that's a pretty good reception for a farm boy from South Dakota.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That's all right.

(Applause)

SECRETARY FREEMAN: The enthusiasm and the warmth of the welcome are characteristic, Mr. Vice President, of the group of men and women you see here before you. We have here the real advance guard, the shock troops as it were, in the battle to improve the position and the income of the American family farmer.

These are the people, and every State in this nation who administer our commodity programs, who make daily very difficult decisions, who carry forward administrative policies and programs that are on occasion complicated but are critical and vital.

The success of our program depends upon these men and women and on the kind of work and the kind of leadership that they're able to give to the elective county committeemen who work under their jurisdiction.

This is a unique administrative organization. There's nothing like it that I know of anywhere in the world. You won't find it in any public administrator's textbook anywhere. As a matter of fact, I guess it would be considered an abomination

1 in most of them. But it works and it grew like Topsy and it's
2 pragmatic and hard-hitting. And in these days when there are
3 those people attacking farm programs, seeking to undermine them,
4 when there are those who are distorting, criticizing, undermining,
5 seeking to play on apprehensions and insecurity, when there are
6 those who are using labels such as cheap food policy today, just
7 as they used labels such as surplus and subsidy when this Ad-
8 ministration first came to power, use it to undermine confidence,
9 to erode support, to try and destroy the limited abilities that
10 agriculture and family farmers have today, to extract from a
11 highly competitive and wrongly organized marketplace a fair
12 and reasonable return with the tremendous contribution that they
13 make and must continue to make for the welfare of this nation
14 and the world.

15 These are the troops that are on the front line. And
16 I want you to know, Mr. Vice President, that these men and
17 women will go out from here and next week they will be holding
18 in their States meetings similar to those that I held and we
19 called shirt-sleeve meetings some places in the Midwest; they'll
20 be sitting down with producers all over this land reviewing
21 programs, getting advice, getting suggestions, setting the
22 record straight and reputing some of the irresponsible attacks
23 that we're hearing now in efforts to undermine and erode our
24 farm programs and the strong forward thrust of this Administra-
25 tion, to continue to build a vital, expanding, prosperous family

1 economy.

2 Now I take most of the time, Mr. Vice President, to
3 present these people to you rather than you to them, because they
4 know you so well and there's little that I can add to the es-
5 teem in which they hold you which was clearly evident here today.

6 Let me just say on a personal because the Vice Presi-
7 dent and I have been close personal friends and political
8 colleagues for many, many years. I know of no one who has done
9 more, continues to do more, or can do it as effectively--can tell
10 the story of American agriculture, the story of food and fibre
11 and its importance, and to call to the attention of people who
12 sometimes forget, what a vital and successful and going institu-
13 tion the American family farm is and how we must keep it going.
14 And keep it going forward.

15 This man, our Vice President, is always moving forward.

16 It's my pleasure and honor to present to you the Vice
17 President of the United States.

18 (Applause)

19 THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

20 Thank you, Secretary Freeman, and our friends, Horace
21 Godfrey and Ed Jancke (?) and members of the Department of
22 Agriculture, and our--all of our committeemen that are here
23 representatives of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conserva-
24 tion Service, the ASCS committee.

25 You know I received a note here from Horace Godfrey a

1 while ago and I'm just looking at it here, dated March 24--I
2 guess that's why I maybe forgot all of its context--contents--
3 in which he said we're going to have a small group over here
4 and we'd like to have you stop by for a half hour or an hour.

5 So when I came into this assembly, into this hall today
6 and I looked and saw this audience I thought I was in the wrong
7 meeting. I was under the opinion that we'd gather around the
8 table up in Secretary Freeman's spacious, ornate office (laugh-
9 ing)--

10 (Laughter)

11 --and that we would have a little private talk and that
12 we'd just visit and then the Secretary would invite me in for
13 one of his very sumptuous expensive luncheons--

14 (Laughter)

15 --I mention these things because of the surroundings in
16 which I live, and I'm always doing this to the Secretary, you
17 see.

18 (Laughter)

19 I tell him to keep sending over food stamps and surplus
20 commodities--

21 (Laughter)

22 --But I've gotten a little tired of eating cotton late-
23 ly--

24 (Laughter)

25 --and since I've quit smoking (laughing) there aren't

1 many other surpluses and he doesn't do too well by me.

2 But, first may I just say that if I had the good judgment
3 that a man in public life ought to have I wouldn't speak
4 because I'll never get a better reception after what I'm about
5 to say than what I received before I started to say something.

6 (Laughter)

7 And I want you to know that I'm touched and I'm very
8 grateful, appreciative of your--the warmth of your reception.
9 I'm also very appreciative of the complimentary remarks of the
10 Secretary who is, as he said, a long-time friend and associate
11 as I am of his. We've been together for many, many years. Work-
12 ed together in politics, worked together in administration,
13 worked together as friends at the University of Minnesota, so I
14 would have expected that he would have told the truth on me.
15 But instead of that he got up here and he just let go, built me
16 up, made me feel good, but he knows that Vice Presidents need
17 that kind of--

18 (Laughter)

19 --psychiatric treatment.

20 (Laughter)

21 (Laughing) One of the things that I often say after
22 an introduction such as Orville Freeman has given to me is that
23 it reminds me of what our later and beloved friend Adlai Steven-
24 son used to say. He said "Flattery is all right if you don't
25 inhale it."

1 And Orville watched me breathing deeply over here.

2 (Laughter)

3 I was inhaling every word he said and even though this
4 introduction cannot be verified by the record or fact, I want
5 you to believe it. It was very, very good.

6 (Laughter)

7 Now you've had a rich program. My goodness, I--I
8 looked over the topics and the speakers that you had and I don't
9 know what there's left to say. A man in this sort of work either
10 ought to do one of three things. He either ought to give the
11 invocation, the sermon, or the benediction.

12 (Laughter)

13 And I gather that you had the invocation, and you had
14 the main speeches, the sermon, and benedictions are so short for
15 a man that likes to speak like I do (laughing)--

16 (Laughter)

17 --so I think I'll just come back and just pretend that
18 you didn't have the sermon and start all over again with you.

19 I know that your topic is "A Look At The Future", and
20 when I asked one of my staff men to sort of--I said now "You
21 put together just a few ideas here that we might talk about.
22 You know my views on agriculture." And he said fine, and here's
23 what he said. He said, "I suggest that you be brief."

24 (Laughter)

25 That's what he said.

(Laughter)

I thought it was sure nice that he spent so many years with me.

(Laughter)

Every member of my staff always puts the same sort of a memo in front of me and they're all living for the day that it'll take hold.

(Laughter)

But now that I've acknowledged what my staff did for me I think I'll just proceed and say what I want to anyway.

(Laughter)

You had a welcome and you had a generous one in this community. I want you to know your Secretary and the other departmental officials are exceedingly proud of this conference and of the individual membership of our ASCS committees. As Secretary Freeman has pointed out to you, this is a unique administrative structure. This isn't another Department of government anywhere that has been able to develop this type of administrative structure to carry on such an elaborate important program as you. The ASCS committee system is a variation on public administration standards which does defy the experts, but which does work. And I want to tell you how much this means to your country and to American agriculture and to everyone. I am convinced that if more countries would adopt the same system that we have here, in terms of our ASCS establishment, that their

1 agriculture would be much improved. I'm not sure just how much
2 of this we export. We try to export ideas. I know that the
3 Department of Agriculture tries to export its technology; its
4 know-how, but I think possibly we have underpaid the type of
5 administration that this Department represents and this depart-
6 ment represents through you and your unique administrative
7 committee structure.

8 If every country, that is what we call the less-developed
9 or the developing countries where there are food deficits and
10 where there is a backward agriculture could embrace a committee
11 structure such as you have here, at least in part and to the
12 best of their, of their professional capacity, I think you'd
13 see a decided improvement in the agriculture throughout the
14 whole world.

15 And I want to underscore in my remarks the importance
16 of your efforts here at home and what it could be abroad. I
17 know the Secretary has talked about this when he's been over-
18 seas, but his main job, as you know, is to tend to the tre-
19 mendous responsibility that is here at home, even though that
20 responsibility does have an impact and does have an inter-
21 connection in the foreign fields.

22 Secretary Freeman has carried the message of American
23 agriculture, he and his associates, to all parts of the world,
24 and isn't it interesting that at long last--at long last--the
25 Government of the United States and other governments are be-

1 ginning to realize that the most important part of our overseas-
2 economic assistance foreign aid program turns out to be agricul-
3 ture.

4 Some of us have been talking about this a long time.
5 Your Secretary has been here six years, and I remember the first
6 week he came here, I remember when we were discussing the--the--
7 the post of Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for International
8 development or International Affairs, we were talking about how
9 important it was to tie in the professional competence of this
10 Department into our foreign aid program, how important it was
11 that people in other countries understood that we were offering
12 them our best, and our best in the professional aspects of
13 agriculture is to be found in the great network of professional
14 people that are associated in American agriculture and in the
15 agri-business community--the producers, and the distributors, in
16 processing community of this country. And Secretary Freeman has
17 carried that message. At long-last I repeat it's beginning to
18 grab, to take hold.

19 And it started to take hold when President Johnson
20 laid down three priorities in terms of our overseas effort.
21 Those three priorities were modernization of agriculture, the
22 improvement of health, and the emphasis upon education. Without
23 those three what good does it do to have steel mills, cement
24 plants and harbors and four-lane highways. Economic development,
25 social development, political development is impossible without

1 a food base and a food and fibre base, without a healthy people,
2 and without a people at least that has a broad base of education.

3 So we're putting first things first and you do not
4 judge what we do overseas any longer by whether or not somebody
5 gets a new stadium, or whether somebody has a cement mill or
6 somebody has a steel mill, or even a big new industry. We've
7 had to go away back and do many things all over again; we've had
8 to start out with fundamentals and basics, and before you can get
9 rich you have to eat and before you can stay rich you have to
10 be healthy, and before you can do any of them you have to be
11 educated. Thomas Jefferson was right when he said you cannot
12 be both free and ignorant, and here we go spending billions of
13 dollars in the cause of freedom and I would suggest that we put
14 an adequate investment in underpinning that cause by education,
15 and by health, and by the development of the basic resource of
16 mankind, which is his food and fibre.

17 This is the international thing. Now, I'm going to come
18 back to that, but I thought you ought to know what the emphasis
19 has been of your secretary and his officers in this Department--
20 and some of you in terms of our broad world-wide responsibilities.

21 We have a great story to tell and you've heard it
22 repeatedly, but I'm the sort of a refugee from a classroom any-
23 way and you never can tell when I'll have to return--

24 (Laughter)

25 --so I like to mention it to keep it uppermost in any-
body's mind.

1 Education is in a sense saturation. Many of us are
2 so busy that we don't have time really to learn and you sort of
3 have to get it through osmosis, just be steeped in it.

4 Some people said education is repetition so with that
5 matter of saturation osmosis, absorbing and repetition--let me
6 just say once again, the story that we have to tell, that we can
7 do with humility and yet with honor and fact, is the amazing
8 accomplishment of our agriculture.

9 I've watched your Secretary try to get the metropolitan
10 press of America interested in American agriculture's achieve-
11 ments. It's not easy. And it's understandable. It's under-
12 standable. After all--this society of ours today is essentially
13 industrialized, urbanized, and with the exception of the rural
14 areas, from whence many of you come because of the nature of
15 your work, the large publications, the media, the television
16 the radio--and I'm not being critical--this is just a fact,
17 their attention is upon the ghetto of the city, it's upon the
18 vast new industrial plant that's being built, the expansion of
19 our economy, the hundreds and thousands of things that happen
20 daily in the great industrial urban centers--and the only time we
21 get in the press in agriculture is when somebody finds a mistake,
22 or somebody's run off with a bag of beans that we couldn't find--

23 (Laughter)

24 --or that the storage costs are too high, or that
25 there's a drought, or that we got an argument on whether or not

1 India's getting enough food, then we make it.

2 That's understandable. I--I don't want to be misunder-
3 stood. This is not a matter of criticism; it's simply the fact
4 that there's so few people presently involved in agricultural
5 production as compared to the total population that it doesn't
6 always attract the same attention that some other things do.

7 Now take a great newspaper, anyone of the great metro-
8 politan newspapers, their attention needs obviously--is obviously
9 focused pretty much on what's happening in their market, in
10 their area, and of course on the international scene, the great
11 international, the dramatic international developments.

12 Well, our story that we need to tell has to be told in
13 the old-fashioned way. You've got to tell it.

14 My Dad once told me something I've never forgotten.
15 He said, "I want you to know, young man, you're not half as
16 smart as you think you are, so you better work twice as hard as
17 you planned on working."

18 (Laughter)

19 I've never forgotten it.

20 (Laughter and applause)

21 So I have a simple way of trying to overcome the inher-
22 ent obstacles that are in my life and the limitations that are
23 mine, and we all have them, and I've had people that reminded me
24 of mine every day, and I'm beginning to believe them.

25 (Laughter)

1 But the only way that I know to overcome this is to
2 work, work, work, be at it, and believe, and take your case to
3 the people. Now if you're going to run for cover the first time
4 somebody criticizes you, you've had it already. You've lost the
5 fight.

6 So I'm asking you to take your story of the programs
7 of this government in agriculture, what we're trying to do, as
8 well as what we've done, and what we hope to do, not only what
9 we've done, what we plant to do, but what we hope to do. Because
10 most people are interested in the tomorrows.

11 Very few people want to be reminded how good they have
12 it now. They don't mind you telling them how bad it is, that
13 sort of rouses the glands--

14 (Laughter)

15 --and gets the blood boiling, but if you go out to tell
16 them how good it is, and how much we've done, that doesn't al-
17 ways attract the same attention as what we're going to do, what
18 we have in mind, and talking about what we've done not as an
19 accomplishment that has achieved its full objective, but as
20 a stage one of where we're going, or stage two.

21 Now we've done some things.

22 First of all, the family farm has not been eliminated,
23 and you remember a few years back they said if this thing keeps
24 up there will just be no family farms. As a matter of fact,
25 I believe I've heard the Secretary say we have made substantial

1 progress in viable family farms, and I mean farms that can pro-
2 duce an income that's really a family farm, not that two-acre
3 patch alone. Some--many of those have been liquidated, so to
4 speak, have been taken over, gone. But good solid, family-
5 farming is a fact in America. It's every bit as much a fact
6 as the development of corporate industry in America. As a
7 matter of fact, there are more viable family farms today than
8 there have been for years, and family farming works. Family
9 farming is better when it is tied in with the cooperative move-
10 ment.

11 I'm a strong, pro-Co-op man when it comes to agricul-
12 ture, and I think our coops are vital to American agriculture
13 and I think they need good management. We need to train admin-
14 istrators for cooperatives, just exactly as you train business
15 executives for corporations. A cooperative is no longer a
16 social society; it's a part of the business of agriculture, and
17 it needs people who understand that and we need to emphasize it.
18 But let's fact it--let's add up the pluses. Family farming is
19 still here. Family farming is effective. Family farming is
20 efficient. Family farming is productive. Family farming can
21 be rewarded, economically, and many other ways,

22 Your secretary has done something else which you've
23 cooperated in. We've taken the message of a diversification
24 to the agricultural community, to rural America, and this
25 doesn't mean that you downgrade American agriculture. It does

1 mean that you can have industry, small industries, and sometimes
2 even large industries in rural areas that provide economic
3 opportunity for members of a farm family, so that those families
4 can remain in the area, stay there, so that the area doesn't
5 become depopulated, so that the businessman on Main Street doesn't
6 have to rely entirely upon the producer of food and fibre, but
7 that the population can be dispersed in this country.

8 I think people would catch on to that pretty quick. Why
9 does everybody want to chock to death in canyons of concrete,
10 bricks and empty steel?

11 I was out home in Minnesota last weekend. I tell you
12 the air was fresh.

13 (Laughter)

14 And it's nice. It's good.

15 There's room in Amerca, you know; we don't all have to
16 climb on each other all the time. There's plenty of room and
17 what we need to do is to get the story across to America that
18 there's culture, education, health and opportunity every place
19 in America. That's what this Administration is trying to do.
20 We're trying to make it--

21 (Laughter)

22 --so you can live every place.

23 One of my assignments that I have is to work with the
24 local government officials, as Orville knows; the President asked
25 me to be his liaison with the mayors, and the city managers, and

1 the local government officials. I'm working to day in what we
2 call the President's Council on Youth Opportunity, trying to
3 work with our mayors and our municipal officials on these
4 tremendously-difficult problems that relate to the life of our
5 young people and particularly in these summer months when
6 there's--when the word is out that there can be trouble--they call
7 it the long hot summer.

8 So my frame of reference for much that I do is with the
9 mayors of the larger metropolitan areas, so my sympathy is with
10 them. I believe that I have some understanding of their pro-
11 blems. I was once Mayor of Minneapolis. The gentleman who is
12 the Secretary of Agriculture was then the Chairman of our Civil
13 Service Commission. They used to call us the diaper brigade
14 back in those days.

15 (Laughter)

16 (Applause)

17 But part of the answer to urban America's problems
18 today is to stem the inflow of people to see that America today
19 doesn't become just a nation in which the coastlines are over-
20 populated and around the Great Lakes overpopulated, and the
21 Gulf, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, but that the great hinter-
22 land offers opportunity.

23 And you're not going to get people to live in those
24 hinterlands out in rural America unless there are good schools,
25 and good universities, unless there are art galleries and orchestras

1 and unless there are good businesses. In other words, young
2 people today have a view of the world that's much different
3 than 50 years ago, and their view is right. In other words, they
4 want to be where the action is and they also want to be where
5 the opportunity is to be found and they want to be where there
6 is good living.

7 So the Department of Agriculture is an integral part
8 of a great system that's being developed in this government to
9 promote the development of and the advancement of all of
10 America. So it doesn't make any difference where you live, you
11 can have a great chance to make something out of your life. And
12 when we talk about poverty, the most tragic poverty in America
13 is not to be found in our cities, but in parts of rural America.
14 It's there where far too little attention is given to that
15 poverty by local government. When you get a large number of
16 people congregated together in the big industrial centers or
17 city, you've got to do something about their problems or it will
18 explode.

19 But when you're out in the countryside left out there
20 so-to-speak by yourself you can literally be lost, forgotten,
21 if it were not for the Department of Agriculture; if it were not
22 for the Office of Economic Opportunity; if it were not for the
23 Department of Health, Education, and Welfare here, and those
24 associated with it at a local level.

25 But I think it's time that we talked very plainly with

1 each other. I've been doing a lot of that plain talk and it's
2 been getting me in a little of trouble, but I intend to keep it
3 up. You can't live forever you know,--

4 (Laughter)

5 --either politically or physically, so you better make
6 the most out of what time you have, and I think we ought to
7 recognize it at--in the local government jurisdictions that
8 less attention is paid to the needs of rural people than any
9 other and that's why your Federal Government has to have
10 programs that reach out to those rural people in education.
11 That's why we've got a Federal Aid to Education Program for the
12 disadvantaged. That's why we're trying to coordinate the
13 activities of the Department of Agriculture and the Office of
14 Economic Opportunity for rural Americans. That's why we have
15 the Rural Community Development Program, which, by the way,
16 needs a little more funding up in Congress.

17 You know, you're not denied the right to talk to your
18 Congressman. You know that, don't you?

19 (Laughter)

20 You are citizens.

21 (Applause)

22 We have a number of programs up there that we can use
23 your help on. The Hatch Act--if you're under it, I don't know
24 all this stuff--but if you're under it it didn't Hatch you that
25 much, I want you to know that.

(Laughter)

We're not asking you to go out and lead any political revolts or any political parties, but we are asking you to be good citizens and you'll be derelict in your responsibilities when you're in Washington if you don't go down to Congress, or up to Congress, and talk to the people that you know about the needs of the people in your area.

And remember, that farmer that you're representing in that committee, is not just a farmer, he's a member of the church, maybe of the school board; he has children or relatives or a family, and he needs all kinds of attention. And I wish that you'd just get as active as some other people around this country. We have a lot of actionists now. I'm not worried about that you're going to be overly-agitating.

(Laughter)

But don't just spend your time cogitating either.

(laughter)

Get up here and do a little talking and a little planning and working with the Members of Congress that need to hear from you; they'd like to hear from you.

So what I tried to tell you now is we're trying to build a rural America, a rural America that is not only farms, and viable, healthy farms, but we're trying to build a rural America in which young Americans will want to live and rear their children, in which there are jobs and opportunities. After all, democracy

1 after all means freedom of choice. And a man that's born out
2 in Nebraska ought not to have a choice of either staying in
3 Nebraska on a farm or going to New York. He ought to have the
4 choice of staying in his community on the farm or being able to
5 go to a fine university which he can by the way if he's in
6 Nebraska, and have a community that's at hand, close at hand,
7 that has cultural attainment, that has industry and jobs and
8 finance. And all that comes to make up a good life.

9 We ought not to have to run people across this country
10 like a shuttle bus system, in order for them to hear a sympathy
11 orchestra, in order for them to get another job to implement
12 their--to add to their income.

13 And by the way, I know many people say isn't it too
14 bad that folks have to take on a little moonlighting. (Laughing)
15 Well, my dear friends, I've been moonlighting all my life--

16 (Laughter)

17 --if a man only had one job, he couldn't survive. My
18 goodness, I--I've--I have to go back again to my original
19 teacher who was my Dad. When I got married and had our first
20 little baby, little Nancy, Orville remembers--he was right there.
21 He scared the living daylights out of me when I came back from
22 the hospital one night. I even borrowed money from him so we
23 could get her out of the hospital.

24 (Laughter)

25 And I want you know, Freeman's always had money. I want

1 you to know that.

2 (Laughter)

3 (Applause)

4 Not much, but--

5 (Laughter)

6 --he always had a little bit more than I did when I
7 needed it. At least he--we used to have financial arrangements
8 and I'm never sure if I paid him back, but I told him so much
9 about it he's confused. Now he's not sure.

10 (Laughter)

11 But I remember when we had that first little baby,
12 Nancy, and I said to my Dad, "How am I going to afford this?".
13 He said, "Two things, son. You should have thought about that
14 before, you know.--

15 (Laughter)

16 "That's No. 1." And I told him I was, it just didn't
17 enter my mind at the moment.

18 (Laughter)

19 (Applause)

20 The second thing he said, "If you're not making enough
21 money on the job you have, get another job. Have two."

22 Well, I'm not advocating that you ought to have two,
23 but if you need it, there's something worse.

24 What I'm saying is there's nothing worse than a farm
25 family living in a great part of rural America, attending to a
great farm, and the proprietor, the mother and the father, or

1 whoever it is running that farm, trying to earn a good living
2 and having their son that may wanting to be living in their home
3 until he picks himself a wife and goes off and gets a job in
4 town, there's nothing wrong with that. And that's why the town
5 ought to have the job.

Tape #2 6 America belongs to everybody. And we ought to have a
7 uniform standard of excellence across this country and that's
8 what we're trying to build.

9 Now I want you to talk about that. You like to talk.
10 You like to talk almost as much as I do. I know, I get around
11 with you.

12 (Laughter)

13 And there are going to be people who are going to want
14 to talk to you about a lot of things. Some people are going to
15 want to tell you their problems and you ought to listen to those
16 problems. But then you ought to tell them what you have in
17 mind too.

18 It's sort of like what we say about dissent. I believe
19 in the right of dissent over whatever it might be. Well, my
20 goodness, I spent a lot of my life using dissent and being a
21 dissenter. But I also believe in the right of advocacy. If the
22 other other fellow wants to tell me how wrong I am, I want to
23 tell him how right I think I am. I think I have a right to do
24 that, or to put it another way. If somebody wants to criticize
25 our programs, then I want to at least have the right to defend
them.

(Applause)

Now a word about those programs. We're not trying to tell anybody that the programs that we presently have are the best that man can devise. Because I know that both the Secretary and myself and Jancke and Godfrey here and others all have ideas that we'd like to put into effect, and we don't always agree. Of course, each one of us thinks our programs and our ideas are the better or the best. But I'll tell you this, that the programs that we have today are the best that we're able to get through Congress and we're not running a dictatorship here. No one around here has omnipotent wisdom, and we don't have any paternalistic society. We have to go up to Congress with a program, and I was in the Congress and we used to try to pass an agricultural bill--we passed one three times one year before we got it really passed in both houses. I used to watch Freeman coming up there, I got to thinking he wanted to be there he was coming up so often.

(Laughter)

We'd get it passed the Senate and then they'd knock it out in the House and get it over in the House and knock it out in the Senate. And it was going on like a tennis match with the ball being netted every other serve. So it's not easy to get a farm program through the Congress. After all Members of Congress represent their constituents. How many Members of Congress are there from rural America. You've got to have a program that

1 appeals to the producer, to the consumer, and takes into con-
2 sideration the resources of the Federal Establishment, the Federal
3 Government.

4 You have to have a program that is both flexible so tha
5 it is not an imposition upon people and at the same time that it
6 has enough to it of substance so that it doesn't run wild.

7 There's a difference between flexibility of a program
8 so that it can be expanded or contracted or having one that
9 just gets completely out of control or has no control. You even
10 have to be careful of the words you use, unless somebody jump
11 on you and get you into an argument on semantics and rhetoric
12 rather than substance of the program.

13 Now we think that we have been--that we have passed the
14 programs about as good as we can get through this Congress. In
15 fact I'd hate to go back up to this Congress right now with a
16 new farm program.

17 People in Congress are intelligent people; they have
18 their own interests; they have their own points of view; and
19 it's no simple task to take a program that's as widespread as
20 this one, as comprehensive, as intricate, as complex, as delicate.
21 And I served on the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry and
22 you men and women know this, for years and was an attentive hard-
23 working member. I hope. At least I tried to be. And it was
24 difficult to understand these legislative endeavors or these
25 legislative initiatives made in agriculture.

1 So we're trying to do the best that we can with what
2 we have to do with, and I suggest that when people are critical
3 not that you engage them in a heated argument, but that you listen
4 to their criticism, you observe what they have to say and then
5 you offer what we've tried to do and then you come back to your
6 Secretary through the proper channels with the suggestions that
7 you've received and the proposals that you believe have some
8 merit. You are the eyes and the ears of this Administration's
9 agricultural policy. You are the eyes and ears of rural America,
10 not just this administration. You're not out there just to re-
11 present this Administration. You're there to represent farm
12 producers, and you owe it to them and you owe it to us to tell
13 us what they're saying. And I know sometimes we're not going to
14 like it. I've been out there. I know. I know they're unhappy,
15 and need to hear not that they're just unhappy, but why? Now
16 what do you suggest, what do you propose?

17 We have a number of people in Washington--there are
18 more Secretaries of State in Washington than any other place in
19 the world. Everybody knows how to be Secretary of State down
20 here. If you don't believe so, ask Dean Rusk. He's got advisors
21 every day. And there are an awful lot of people who think they
22 know how to be President. I think there ought to be only one
23 extra myself.

24 (Laughter)

25 And then there are a limited number of people who think

1 they ought to be Secretary of Agriculture. There are fewer, I
2 might say,--

3 (Laughter)

4 --because of the nature of the difficulties that the
5 Secretary encounters, but there are all kinds of people that
6 are our critics, and they have their right to criticize and
7 what we ought to do is to say, "Now, look, spell that out, will
8 you. I know that prices are not too good in this commodity or
9 that commodity, what do you think we ought to do to improve it?
10 What do you think we ought to do to improve hog prices? What do
11 you think we ought to do to improve cattle prices? What do you
12 think we ought to do in reference to the Food for Freedom program,
13 the war on hunger? What are your suggestions? Tell me. Do you
14 think America ought to carry the whole burden or do you think
15 it was right that the Secretary of Agriculture under instruc-
16 tions from the President tried to get others in other parts of the
17 world to carry some of the burden. Do you think the American
18 taxpayer ought to pay for it all? Or do you think possibly some
19 of our friends in Europe and elsewhere ought to join in?"

20 Ask some questions. Give us your observation. You're
21 the eyes and ears of the farmer, you're the eyes and ears of
22 this Administration, you're our advisor, you're our observers.
23 You're not just administrators. With all of that responsibility,
24 we need to hear from you. We need to hear from you.

25 I am here to tell you that the things that we read

1 every morning, they don't even mention the word farmer. I read
2 three newspapers every morning, and I would be willing to bet
3 you a goodly size sum of money that if you went through everyone
4 of the pages you wouldn't find the word "farmer" or "farm" five
5 times a month--or--I mean, five times a week. It's not there.

6 You find a lot about immigration, find a great deal
7 about Middle East, Far East, Europe, industry, poverty, Negroes,
8 Puerto Ricans, disturbances, demonstrations, but what you read
9 day in and day out doesn't tell anybody in Washington anything
10 about farms except when some columnist says farmers are unhappy.
11 Well, I didn't need to buy a paper to find that out.

12 (Laughter)

13 I can go to Humphrey's Drug Store and find that out.

14 (Laughter)

15 So we have to depend on you. I say right back to the
16 old-fashioned communication. You tell our story and listen to
17 theirs. And you tell the story that you're involved in as a
18 part of this program and then you listen to what they say and
19 tell the Secretary, tell Mr. Godfrey, tell Mr. Jencke. And if
20 you can't get them to answer your letters, tell me, and I'm very
21 serious about it. I'm not interested in American agriculture
22 because of its politics. I happen to have grown up as the
23 Secretary said, in a rural community. All of my associates for
24 years were in rural America. My family came from rural America.
25 We're in business 60 years in rural America. My father is buried

1 in rural America. I'm interested in rural America. Very inter-
2 ested in it. I think every American ought to be, because if you
3 can't have a healthy rural America, you're going to have a sicker
4 urban America. Make no mistake about that.

5 (Applause)

6 Now what do we want you to help us with? What are the
7 three pressing problems today? Well, first of all, is improved
8 needed necessity for an improved price, for improved farm income.
9 And I must say price, because the cost of what a farmer pays to
10 stay in business is up. Taxes just didn't go up in Montgomery
11 County; they went up in Wright County where I live too. And
12 that's a little rural county out in Minnesota, Buffalo, Minnesota
13 is the county seat. A very fine county seat town.

14 They went up in Marysville Township where I have my
15 land. And if you got a little tractor, and I have one, and you
16 go in and buy a little repair part for it, it costs double what
17 it did a few years ago, if you can get it. Fertilizer's up.
18 Everything that farmer touches has gone up. Is it any wonder
19 that he wonders--is it any wonder that he's concerned when his
20 prices go up?

21 Now, the Secretary's been carrying this battle on like
22 a Trojan, a valient man. My name is Hortia; I'm supposed to be
23 the man that stood at the bridge, and Freeman's the guy that's
24 doing it.

25 (Laughter)

1 You can't expect the man in the city to get more for
2 what's he's doing if the farmer in the country is getting less
3 for what he's producing. You just can't expect it.

4 It isn't fair. You can't raise minimum wages, And
5 we ought to, and we're for it, and then have lower farm prices.
6 You can't do it. Everyone of us are consumers. I consume like
7 crazy and when I--when we're home in Minnesota, I ask my wife,
8 I say, "Are you feeding the county, or is it just our family?".
9 I don't know, you know. When you have boys growing if there's
10 any dairy surplus it's not because of what the Humphreys are
11 doing, I'll tell you that. We buy milk like the cows are going
12 out of style, and it costs money. What I'm saying is what you've
13 got to say. You've got to stand up for your people.

14 One of my good friends is Walter Ruether. I think he's
15 a great labor leader. I'll guarantee you one thing about Walter
16 Ruether, he's going to see that the UAW members get a fair wage.
17 I was out meeting with the General Motors and American Motors,
18 and Ford Motor, last week. They know that they're going to have
19 to talk to Mr. Ruether. And I met with Walter, too. He knows
20 he's going to talk with them. And they want a fair wage, and
21 they're entitled to it, and the company's entitled to a fair
22 price. The farmer is too.

23 (Applause)

24 And I think it's about time we said so.

25 (Applause)

1 And it's our job to help him get it. Now the Government
2 can't do all this alone. The Government has minimums that it
3 tries to help bring about a fair price. And we've done a lot
4 of things. We've gone into direct payments. We've had--we've
5 done many things that people said couldn't be done. The surpluses
6 that used to be the bugaboo, they're gone, with the exception
7 of one or two commodities.

8 We've cut back on operational costs, storage costs
9 and so forth. We've improved a great deal. Look what this
10 man inherited; look what you inherited when we started out here
11 6, 7 years ago. It was unbelievably tough, and it is a fact
12 that farm income is up, and it is a fact that per farm income
13 is up, and it is a fact that net farm income is up.

14 But it is also a fact that the cost that the farmer
15 has to pay to stay on that farm are up, and that's what people
16 need to hear about. That's fair reporting. That's fair obser-
17 vation.

18 We've simply got to get that story across and you have
19 to fight for it. Don't leave it all up to him, or the President,
20 or the Vice President. I've seen the Secretary of Agriculture
21 go right out to New York City and Philadelphia and Boston and
22 make the same kind of speech that he makes right out to Yankton,
23 South Dakota, to the farm people, and so do I. In the last
24 campaign I went up into New York City and said just what I just
25 told you a little while ago, that that dairy farmer and that

1 farmer is entitled to a fair price, and somebody said, "Ah, huh,
2 that means that Humphrey wants the consumer to pay more." I
3 didn't say I wanted him to pay more, but I know that the auto-
4 mobile that somebody buys next year may cost a little more.
5 And I'll bet you there won't nearly be--there won't be nearly
6 as articles on that as there is if a farmer gets another two
7 cents a pound for his beef.

8 So stand up and be counted. We've got a job to do.
9 Don't just take care of your job. Take care of those customers
10 of yours. And that's another thing my Dad taught me. He said
11 "I want to tell you that we'll be nothing unless the folks that
12 come in here believe in us and believe in us and are willing to
13 believe in us enough to spend their money." You'll be nothing
14 unless the people out there in rural America believe that you're
15 working for them. You're not working for the Secretary alone.
16 You're not working for this government alone. You're--you're--
17 you are charged with working for the people that you represent.
18 You will. Many of you elected committeemen that you work with,
19 some of you appointed committeemen. But those township and
20 county committee people are elected and you're working with
21 them and they have to represent that rural america. I want
22 American agriculture to be inviting for the next generation and
23 for this generation, It's entitled to a fair price, and a
24 fair wage and a fair return on investment. And any county that
25 says it believes in social justice and any government or country

1 that says it believes in minority rights and protection of
2 minority rights, and any country that says that it believes in
3 equal opportunity and believes in one citizenship and opportunity
4 for all then ought to believe in it for the farmer, regardless
5 of his race, color, creed or where he lives. I just happen to
6 think that they're a minority, too.

7 (Applause)

8 So you give us your ideas that you hear about how we
9 can improve farm income. We want to improve farm income. We're
10 not engaged in trying to keep farm income down. When farm in-
11 come is down, Freeman's ulcers act up.

12 (Laughter)

13 And that's true. And I'm saying this to my dear friend.
14 I speak of him in that vernacular, because we are good friends.
15 And he has a tough job; the President is unhappy when farm in-
16 comes go down. We want it up. We believe in balance, in this
17 economy.

18 Now, another thing we need is adequate supplies.

19 And we have to erase from the thinking of people's minds
20 that when you got a little extra in the warehouse that it's a
21 surplus. I've been on this kick for a long time. And I'll
22 tell you, that if this government--if this--I don't mean this
23 government; if the people of this country got as excited over--
24 over the surpluses that we have in some other commodities as they
25 do in agriculture, there might be some sense of equity. Let me

1 put it another way. When we're short of ammunition, there'll be
2 five front-page articles. Some congressman will get up there and
3 say, "I've just discovered they're short of such-and-such milli-
4 meter--88 millimeter ammunition in Vietnam." Well, what about
5 rice? You can't eat those 88 millimeters.

6 And I'll tell you that rice in Vietnam is every bit as
7 important as any amount of ammunition that you can put there.

8 And how do you expect to be a world power with a small
9 country's reserves in food and fibre. We don't have big re-
10 serves in food and fibre today. We have reserves, thank good-
11 ness, but I want to encourage you to think with us constructively.
12 How much reserves do we need? And one of the problems that we
13 have today is that when we talk about reserves some people say
14 "Well, if you have those reserves it's going to depress the
15 market". Do you mean to tell me we're not ingenious enough to
16 know how to be able to have an inventory without depressing the
17 market? I hope we've more than that in our lifetime.

18 (Applause)

19 I'll put it this way. It'll do you no good to have
20 a powerful military reserve of weapons or men if you don't have
21 the food. Food and fibre are as vital to national security as
22 atomic weapons, and they're less injurious. Much very, very vital.

23 Thirdly, what's the other big problem we have, how do
24 we feed this hungry world? Now we can't do it alone, but we can
25 set the standards. If you believe in Food for Freedom, talk about

1 it. If you think it ought to be bigger talk about it. Public
2 policy ultimately determines what this--what we can do. Your
3 Congress sets policy; your President makes recommendations; your
4 President wants to do all that this nation can possibly do to
5 help the people in the food-deficit areas of the world. We
6 want to save lives, not take them. We want to build nations,
7 not destroy them. We'd rather be known as the protector of
8 people, rather than the policeman. We'd rather be people that
9 feed and heal and educate, rather than be lawyers. We ought to
10 have the same amount of determination to wage war on hunger
11 that we do to wage war on aggression.

12 And you've got to get busy. You're out talking in your
13 community. I don't know what you do after Sunday church, if you
14 go to church on Sunday--I recommend that you do. But if you do
15 you just get in the car and go home or do you do like I do just
16 sit around and chat for a while. Most people do. You stand
17 out in front and visit folks you haven't seen for a long time.
18 And if you get a chance why get in a blow for freedom. Talk
19 about the war on hunger, talk about what we're trying to do.
20 Talk about the importance of American leadership. We are giving
21 that leadership, but that leadership needs public support.

22 Do that for us.

23 Now, finally, I want to mention one thing that's trans-
24 pired and that's the tariff negotiations that have taken place
25 in Geneva. You're going to be asked about these things and I

1 gather that some people have already reported to you and if they
2 haven't I hope that they will. It's known as the Kennedy Round,
3 and if that kind of stops you for a moment, don't feel badly, I
4 didn't know what they were talking about either for a long time.
5 But we always have tag names down here, you know. They'll--one--
6 first thing, you've got to spend one year in Washington to learn
7 the vocabulary, the new vocabulary, because you never learned
8 that back home.

9 And after you get used to all the phraseology that we
10 concoct around here, then you start to gather what's going on
11 but we keep it confused like that for a while so that you don't
12 get too involved all at once.

13 The Kennedy Round is--what it means is it was started
14 by President--the late President Kennedy as one of his most
15 important initiatives, some five years ago, with the passage of
16 the Trade Expansion Act. It was an effort made by the late
17 President, initiated by him, to expand trade, to try to lower
18 tariff barriers, to try to open up markets amongst the free
19 nations of the world. It was carried on by President Johnson
20 with great personal leadership, and it has been concluded. It's
21 a massive negotiation involving many, many nations--50, 60 nations.

22 What's it's purpose? To lower trade barriers, to re-
23 move those impediments to trade, to open up markets, to try to get
24 a body of law that will be a base for international commerce.
25 Now why? Because the last great depression that this world ex-

33?
or 23?

1 perienced was after the failure of the Trade Conference in London
2 in 1933. It broke down completely and tariff walls went up. Each
3 nation became self-sufficient. We enherited Musso--Hitler, Tojo
4 and others. When nations start to live by the rule of the jungle
5 in commerce and business and trade it produces war. One of the
6 first solid steps to peace is an international body of law or
7 code of conduct amongst nations in the field of trade and that's
8 what we try to do and we said now we've got this chance in this
9 last third of the 20th Century, and let's do something about it.

10 And the Congress said all right, we'll give you that
11 right, Mr. President, we'll give you that authority to negotiate
12 a massive agreement, a comprehensive agreement, but it must in-
13 clude agriculture, and what's more is, American agriculture must
14 not be injured; on balance it must come out either on an even-
15 Stephen basis we say, or it must come out with a plus. And what
16 did we try to negotiate, primarily?

17 Well there were many things, of course. Textiles, which
18 of course use our cotton products, relating to some products
19 about wool, but very little. Fruits and vegetables. Dairy pro-
20 ducts, meat products. But the great item was the grains agree-
21 ment, because we're the largest producer of grains for export;
22 feed grains and wheat and we were able to arrive at a satisfactory
23 grains agreement. I notice that Mr. Sneckter (?), the under-
24 secretary, has made some comment recently on his return. Some of
25 the leaders of agriculture organizations were there in Geneva,

1 and have come back reasonably well pleased. You never get all
2 that you want. What you got out of it basically, were some
3 standards. What you have out of this is an assurance to the
4 people that you represent in the rural areas of America that the
5 markets are not going to be closed on them, that the price is
6 going to be reasonable, that they will have access, and, you
7 got something else: you got an agreement on the part of the
8 highly industrialized agricultural nations, productive nations,
9 that they'll bear a share of the food aid for the food-deficit
10 countries. This is very important.

11 Your Secretary and the other officers of this Depart-
12 ment will explain to you in more detail. I'll only say this, that
13 had the Kennedy Round failed, it would have been the greatest
14 threat to American security and to American prosperity that I
15 can imagine. It's success means if we're competitive, if we
16 work, we have an opportunity for a better income, a greater in-
17 dustrial expansion, better agricultural prices, greater agricul-
18 tural exports. And our agricultural exports are vital to th is
19 country. You're representing a segment of America today that
20 is the great hope of this country to bring its balance of pay-
21 ments in balance. Very important for the protection of the
22 dollar, and when somebody says these farm programs cost too much
23 just remind them in cold language that if it weren't for American
24 exports, Mr. Critic, your dollar wouldn't be worth what it is
25 today. It's American agricultural exports that are protecting

1 the value of that dollar. It's American agriculture exports that
2 are preventing the raid on our gold supply. It's American
3 agriculture exports today that are building American commerce.

4 And you're a part of it. So carry this message.

5 I come to you this morning--I'm one of the optimists in
6 this government, you know. I told a friend of mine up in Congress
7 the other day that was very pessimistic. I said, you know we
8 ought to go down to the doctor down here and just tap into your
9 blood line and you tap into mine. I'll give you a pint of me
10 and you give me a pint of you, and that would maybe balance us
11 both off.

12 (Laughter)

13 Because we got some perpetual pessimists around this
14 town. Some of us need to be basically optimistic. And I think
15 history's on my side, about this country. I think we've done
16 pretty well. Of course, every day I read how many mistakes we're
17 making, but I want to tell you that if this is the way to get
18 ahead, we need to make more mistakes. We've done well.

19 The story of America is not the sum total of its mis-
20 takes. The story of America is the sum total of its little
21 successes. Occasionally a retreat. But then coming back again
22 on another day. And this great America of ours is as powerful
23 and rich, and it has ever-growing justice and expanding frontier
24 of freedom and opportunity and those are not just words, they
25 mean something today.

1 And I want to be sure that you're a part of the tri-
2 bunes, the committees of correspondents, the advocates, of this
3 tremendous effort. You remember what George Washington said
4 about Tom Paine. He said that Tom Paine, the great pamphleteer,
5 the great writer of revolutionary material, said he was worth
6 an army, one man. You can be worth a whole battery of public
7 relations, information officers, any one of you, if you'll carry
8 the message of what we've tried to do, what we are doing, and
9 what we hope to do--we hope to expand these exports, we plan to
10 see farm income improved; we intend to have adequate reserves
11 for peace and war, for our international responsibilities. We
12 are giving and will give even greater leadership to the war on
13 hunger. We intend to see through the galaxy of programs that
14 we have that rural America has every opportunity that urban
15 America has, plus clean air--plus clean air.

16 (Applause)

17 And we don't intend to retreat one bit from the stands
18 that we've taken. We intend to move ahead. We intend to make
19 these programs work. We want our critics to offer us constructive
20 suggestions. We claim no monopoly on wisdom or knowledge. We
21 are trying to do the best we can with what we have. If what we
22 have is not adequate, tell us what more we need. Tell us whether
23 or not you believe collective bargaining in agriculture will work.
24 Many people think it will. I tend to believe it has great merit.
25 What are its pitfalls, if any? What are its advantages?

1 Let's discuss this. Let's get it out in the open. Let's
2 find out how we can improve farm income without any serious ad-
3 verse effects upon the rest of this economy. I think that by im-
4 proving it we will help all of the economy. And, above all, this,
5 you can't do anything, unless you believe in what you're doing.

6 And if you don't believe in what you're doing, you owe
7 it to yourself and your government to get out quick. I told a
8 group of partisans the other night if you didn't have faith in
9 your leader, faith in your program, faith in what we're doing,
10 you're bound to lose. And I'll tell you something else. Just
11 be careful what you put in the soup, because every time you add
12 a little drop of that rhetorical, verbal oral poison of criticism
13 that is unfounded remember--and it drops into that caldron of
14 soup or bowl of soup--remember you're the one that's going to have
15 to eat it, so try to keep it wholesome, make it palatable.

16 Thank you very much.

17 (Applause)

18 SECRETARY FREEMAN: Is there anybody around here who
19 didn't get the message?

20 Mr. Vice President, we thank you very, very much. We
21 know that you have a very, very crowded schedule. I don't know
22 just how much time you can make yourself available for any
23 questions here, but perhaps you would be willing to take one or
24 two before you get on to what lies down the road, so who will
25 begin?

1 Well, that was a short brief message and I guess it
2 answered all the questions.

3 (Laughter)

4 VOICE: Short?

5 (Laughter and applause)

6 SECRETARY FREEMAN: Well, when you take to the hoostings
7 next week and when you meet some of the criticisms that are
8 unfounded, that are based in some instances upon misunderstanding
9 apprehension and honest concern and confusion, and you'll meet
10 some that are intemperate and bitter and have ulterior motives,
11 and there will be some that are a product of insecurity and fear,
12 that has been spawned in part by those who do have ulterior motives.
13 As the Vice President said there is a record of sharp, dramatic,
14 effective progress. We've got forward momentum. We got new
15 ideas. We're moving. Let's keep moving. And Mr. Vice President,
16 these folks will be able to tell them better how, why, when and
17 what because of the hour you spent with us. We thank you very
18 much.

19 (Applause)

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21 #####
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