



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

REMARKS
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
GRAIN TERMINAL ASSOCIATION
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
November 16, 1967

My friend, Bill Thatcher, member of the Farmers' Union G.T.A., ladies and gentlemen:

It has been my privilege to take part in the annual conventions of this great and respected American farm organization for the last 18 years -- but I am especially pleased and relieved to be here this year. The farm belt polls being what they are, I was not sure my invitation was still good.

I was beginning to feel like the industrialist who suddenly became ill and went to the hospital. He lay there for weeks. No visitors came. No messages were delivered. And then one day he got a card -- from the labor union that represented his employees.

The card read: The Central Executive Committee of Local 246 wishes you a speedy recovery....by a vote of 8 to 7.

Well, I'm not here to poll your convention. When I do, I'll do it "outside the gate" in the time-honored tradition of the Farmers' Union.

Nor am I here to ask for your support on the historic issues of our times -- although that support has never been lacking.

I am here today to talk about the problem of greatest personal concern to you and your organization -- the future of the American farmer.

* * *

American agriculture ranks among mankind's proudest achievements -- and most Americans don't know it.

If you look at America from abroad, as I have recently, you see one thing above all others in your mind's eye -- not only tall cities, not only broad highways, not just shiny appliances, not rockets, not laboratories... but broad, fertile fields, pouring forth their production through modern American agriculture.

You see farms which produce plenty in a world where most people do not have enough to eat.

You see space-age agriculture in a world where many cultivators still rely on the wooden plow.

You see an America that depends on agricultural exports for half of its favorable balance of trade.

You know that America, because of its agriculture, can foster world peace and relieve human suffering by providing sustenance to hundreds of millions of people around the world, while it exports the know-how that poorer nations need in order to better feed themselves.

Then you return home. The picture is different.

You hear that the average American farmer's income still lags behind the American norm.

You see Americans leaving our farms and rural areas at the rate of half-a-million or more a year -- not because they want to live in crowded and congested cities, but because they think they have to, in order to find economic opportunities that will provide a future for themselves and their children.

True, there has recently been some progress for the American farmer.

The mammoth surpluses of the fifties, which glutted the market and threatened to scuttle support for any constructive farm program, have been eliminated.

Gross farm income and net income per farm have risen to unprecedented heights. Net per farm income was 70 per cent higher in 1966 than in 1960 and total net income last year was second only to 1947.

And we have today some basic tools -- the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 and the Food for Freedom Act of 1966 -- that protect the farmer and enable us to meet our objectives at home and abroad. Those programs prevent the painful market fluctuations that have hurt so much this summer and fall from becoming an unmanageable cycle of boom and bust.

But that is not enough for me; and I know it is not enough for you.

The American farmer is still too often a second-class citizen amidst the abundance he has helped create. He is first-class in output, too often second-class in income; first-class in service to the nation and the world, too often second-class in the benefits modern America provides for its citizens.

The American farmer deserves equity.

May I suggest at least four ways in which we can help assure the American farmer first-class citizenship in every area of life? They add up to an Honest Deal for Rural America.

First, we must continue to escalate the War on Hunger.

Food is a powerful instrument for constructive foreign policy in this hungry world -- and it is an instrument that is almost exclusively American.

Moreover, we no longer have to depend only on what is left over in the historic struggle to feed this world's exploding population. The Food for Freedom Act gives us a virtually open-ended authority to assist nations that are willing to help themselves.

We are now sending American food to more than a hundred nations under Food for Freedom. I am happy to say that food shipments to Indonesia, a brave and growing nation which I have just visited, will now receive a new, higher priority.

But the opportunities and the challenge of the War on Hunger are going to grow steadily in the foreseeable future, and this nation must be ready.

We are ready to make full use of our abundance and we must be ready to pay the American farmers -- the soldiers of the soil Bill Thatcher refers to -- a fair price for their contribution to world peace and stability.

This country has an effective Food for Freedom program and it can afford a bigger one in the future.

Food for Freedom is good politics. "A hungry people listens not to reason, nor cares for justice, nor is bent by prayers" says an ancient text.

There can be no peace, no stability, no safety in this nuclear age until the ancient enemy of hunger has been banished from the earth.

Food for Freedom is good economics. It means substantially more income for the American farmer. It means that the American taxpayers will stop paying to keep valuable agricultural resources idle. It can mean prosperous nations abroad that will be an expanding market for American food and factory production in the future.

And Food for Freedom is good morals. When a child starves because the world's elders cannot figure out how to feed him, each of us bears the burden of guilt.

Here is point two in my Honest Deal for Rural America.

It is true -- and as a small town boy I hate to say it -- that rural America is still behind.

More than twice as many farm families as city families live below the poverty level.

Less than half of our farm families have a decent house, a good car, hot and cold running water, and a telephone; in the city, three out of four have these advantages.

These deficiencies are especially important to rural youngsters who are about to choose a career and a place to live.

For every 175 rural youngsters who reach working age, there are fewer than 100 jobs.

About 200 thousand of the young Americans living in rural areas today will leave and go into the city this year.

Their departure will make rural America a poorer place. Their leaving will not only separate them from their families but weaken our rural communities -- weaken them culturally as well as economically.

And for what?....What is waiting for them? Some will find fame and fortune. Many more of them will find themselves confined to slums....doomed to low-paying jobs....isolated, lonesome and hopeless.

America is caught in the Urbanization Trap in the last third of the twentieth century.

Seventy per cent of us already live on one per cent of the land.

We are going to have another 100 million Americans by the end of this century, and all of them will live in the cities if present trends continue.

Our cities are starved for space, fresh air, recreation; our rural areas are starved for jobs and opportunity.

This society is rich enough and creative enough to achieve a balance of growth and opportunity between rural and urban areas.

In the 1930's, modernization meant rural electrification and movie theatres in every town.

In the 1940's it meant many well-paved roads.

Now, it means airports capable of handling short-hop jets, community colleges, modern hospitals and good doctors. The very best in elementary and secondary education. It means golf courses and ballparks. It means drama groups and art classes in addition to church socials.

And it means economic viability -- new investment, new job opportunities, a growing tax base. It means modern America in your town -- your country.

That kind of modernization is occurring in many parts of rural America today.

Where it happens, it is the result of aggressive local initiative, cooperation from private industries, and better use of federal programs that are already available.

It happens because rural people and city people alike are discovering that the good life can be found in the countryside.

I saw a poll taken right here in Minnesota just the other day. Eighty-eight per cent of those questioned favored special measures to encourage farm families to stay on the farm. Eighty-four per cent supported programs to encourage industry to move out to the small towns.

A majority said they would prefer to live on a farm rather than in the city.

I say, let's all do our part to give them a choice!

But the countryside cannot grow without prosperous farms.

So point three is this: Protect and improve our existing commodity program. It is the best we have ever had.

As we gain experience in the sophisticated supply-management techniques required by elimination of surpluses, the program will prove its value over and over again.

Government payments are already providing the thin margin between profit and loss for many producers.

This year the program is paying the producer an additional 48 cents a bushel on wheat, 12 cents a bushel on corn, and 15 cents for each pound of cotton.

Until we develop a weather-proof acreage allotment system we are going to experience crops that exceed our expectations and we are going to need protection. I think we have it.

It is true that prices are down this year. After steady progress since 1960, we are in a "lag" year, largely because of phenomenal growing weather that brought unprecedented harvests in almost every nation. Here in the United States grain harvests were 34 percent higher this year than the average for the past five years.

I know that some interpret this as proof of a fatal flaw in the system.

Let me only say this to you: Progress is seldom smooth. It usually comes in a series of forward thrusts followed by temporary lapses. Today, while the farmer is being short-changed, he still has something to protect.

And protect he must. For the programs that have given us progress in the past and promise more in the future are under attack. No fewer than 21 bills have been introduced in Congress which would, for all practical purposes, terminate existing farm programs.

Don't think those calls for retreat will be stilled by the time this program we all fought so hard for back in 1965 runs out in 1969.

We got a taste of what can happen two weeks ago when legislation to establish a strategic grain reserve was killed in sub-committee.

That bill would have let us withdraw overabundant grain stocks from the commercial market when prices were low. It would have protected the consumer in times of scarcity. It would have helped the producer by substantially increasing wheat, corn and soybean prices.

I can tell you that it was not killed by people who had the farmers' interest at heart.

This country needs reserves of key agricultural commodities. It needs a program that will keep those reserves at common-sense, clearly defined levels.....that specifies how and when they can be released so that they do not interfere with the normal market.

It needs a program that will depend on private sector inventories for normal business operations, but at the same time protect both consumer and producer.

The harsh truth is, my friends, that there are people in this country today who want the kind of totally unrestrained production that could destroy the farm economy. The experts tell us that without our present programs, prices would fall by a third.

I don't have to spell out the likely consequences -- not only for individual farm families, but for the prospects of rural America and for America's agricultural leadership in the world.

It would be tempting to say that extension and better management of our existing programs will solve all the farmer's problems. But it won't.

That brings me to point four -- bargaining power.

Even the general public understands that farmers are not now in a position to decide the prices they get for their products.

Look at the language of commerce: We say the hardware store charges 39 cents for a pound of nails, General Motors charges 3 thousand dollars for a car.

But the farmer, who also produces and sells things, gets five dollars and sixty-one cents, blend, for his milk, or gets 29 dollars for his fat cattle.

The farmer deserves the right to charge for his products instead of getting what the buyer decides he should have.

Moreover, most economic power in America is organized. Labor is organized, business is organized, and farmers pay more because industry's bargaining power is organized.

Industrial workers deserve the gains that they have won with concentrated economic power -- but the farmer deserves parallel gains. He deserves more. He deserves to catch up.

The farmer is tired of being whipsawed by the organized elements in the rest of the economy.

The plain facts are that farmers need bargaining power. They have the desire -- and they should have the right -- to get firm control of their own economic destiny.

Competition is a great American tradition -- but so is equity. If American farmers are going to get equity, they are going to have to bargain.

President Johnson, Secretary Freeman and I are going to do our best to see that you have the right to bargain. President Johnson has asked Bill Thatcher to come to Washington to discuss his bargaining proposals with him in detail, including a National Agricultural Relations Act.

It will not be easy for thousands of independent producers to bargain effectively, but organized labor had its own catalogue of so-called impossibilities, most of which have been realized.

And you will have one important asset working for you -- the experience and accomplishments of the great American cooperative movement. The Farmers' Union, G. T. A., the Central Exchange, and the other farm cooperatives of this country have long been a powerful force for economic justice in America -- justice for the farmer, justice for the country.

Your achievements have been an example to cooperative movements in the developing countries of Asia and Latin America which are now bringing political freedom and economic justice to millions for the first time.

I am confident that successful bargaining will be your next great victory.

Today I have given you the plain facts as I see them.

--Our debt to the American farmer is great -- and it has not been repaid.

--Our progress in recent years has been substantial -- but much remains to be done.

--Our government and its programs now provide the farmer with an essential margin of protection -- although it does not guarantee him prosperity.

--The farmer is entitled to the bargaining power enjoyed by others in our economy no more and no less.

--The problems of our cities and those of rural America are in reality a single national problem that demands the attention of us all.

--Food power used in the War on Hunger is America's special weapon in the quest for peace.

Let's raise the banner here and now: AN HONEST DEAL FOR RURAL AMERICA.

Let's close the Prosperity Gap once and for all.

Let this be one America, under God, with liberty, justice, and a fair share for all.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Those who labor in the earth are chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people."

If ever there were a chosen farmer, it is the American farmer. May this nation honor him accordingly.

###

like good wine
to get better with age

Mayor Byrne

Gov Delander
Lt Gov Goetz

- ✓ Sen McCarthy
- ✓ Sen Young
- ✓ Sen Burdick
- ✓ Sen Mondale

President
Tony
Dechant
Emil
Lorick

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

GRAIN TERMINAL ASSOCIATION

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Norman Olson

got a letter
from Bill Thatcher!
Tonto let try to answer

Miss Egan Benam, too! NOVEMBER 16, 1967

My friend, Bill Thatcher, member of the Farmers'
Union G.T.A., ladies and gentlemen:

Good offer!

VP
I'm like
the farmer -
maintain
future -
not sure
of the
harvest.

It has been my privilege to take part in the
annual conventions of this great and respected American
farm ~~organization~~ ^{Cooperatives} for the ~~last~~ ^{past} 18 years -- but I am
especially pleased and relieved to be here this year!

^{Public opinion}
The farm belt polls being what they are, I was not sure that
my invitation was still good. — but I should have

Krumm, Bill Thatcher + GTA are good
friends in lean years + good years.

30th
Annual
Meeting

∟ I was beginning to feel like that industrialist
who suddenly became ill and went to the hospital.

He lay there for weeks. No visitors came. No messages
were delivered. And then one day he got a card --
from the labor union that represented his employees.

∟ The card read: The ~~Central~~ Executive Committee
of Local 246 wishes you a speedy recovery....by a
vote of 8 to 7."

∟ Well, I'm not here to poll your convention.
When I do, I'll do it "outside the gate" in the time-honored
tradition of the Farmers' Union. o

∟ Nor am I here to ask for your support on the
historic issues of our times -- although that support
has never been lacking.

delete

I am here today to talk about the problem of
greatest personal concern to you and your organization --
the future of the American farmer. and that means
the future of America.

American agriculture ranks among mankind's
 proudest achievements -- and ~~not~~ ^{too many} Americans
 don't know it.

If you look at America from abroad, as I have recently, you see one thing above all others in your mind's eye -- not only tall cities, not only broad highways,
not just shiny appliances, ~~not~~ ^{just} rockets, ~~not~~ ^{not} laboratories...
but broad, fertile fields, pouring forth their production
through modern American agriculture.

↳ You see farms which produce plenty in a world where most people do not have enough to eat.

↳ You see space-age agriculture in a world where many cultivators still rely on the wooden plow.

↳ You see an America that depends on agricultural exports for half of its favorable balance of trade.

↳ You know that America, because of its agriculture, can foster world peace and relieve human suffering by providing ~~sustenance~~ ^{food + fiber to} hundreds of millions of people around the world, while it exports the know-how that poorer nations need in order to better feed themselves.

But ~~↳~~ Then you return home. ^{and} The picture is different.

~~You hear that the average American farmer's income still lags behind the American norm.~~

↳ You see Americans leaving our farms and rural areas at the rate of half-a-million or more a year -- not because they want to live in crowded and congested cities, but

because they think they have to, in order to find economic opportunities that will provide a future for themselves and their children.

Even so, we have made progress in
~~True, there has recently been some progress~~
+ the past 7 years
~~for the American farmer.~~

↳ The mammoth surpluses of the fifties, which glutted the market and threatened to scuttle support for any constructive farm program, have been eliminated.

Net farm income has gone up
~~Gross farm income and net income per farm have~~
by 70% since 1960.
~~risen to unprecedented heights. Net per farm income~~
~~was 70 per cent higher in 1966 than in 1960 and total~~
~~net income last year was second only to 1947.~~

↳ And we have today some basic tools -- the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 and the Food for Freedom Act of 1966 -- that ^{help} protect the farmer and enable us to ^{better} meet our objectives at home and abroad.

Those programs ~~reduce~~ ^{reduce} the painful market fluctuations that have hurt so much this summer and fall, from becoming an unmanageable cycle of boom and bust.

But that is not enough for me; and I know it is not enough for you.

delete

The American farmer is still too often a second-class citizen amidst the abundance he has helped create. He is first-class in output, too often second-class in income; first-class in service to the nation and the world, too often second-class in the benefits modern America provides for its citizens.

now The American farmer deserves ~~more~~ ^{Better - He Deserve} ^{Equity} ~~at least four~~ ^{four} ways in which we can ~~help assure the American farmer first class citizenship in every area of life~~ ^{assure him that equity} ~~They add up to an Honest Deal for Rural America.~~

First, we must continue to escalate the War on Hunger.

Food is ^{our most} ~~a~~ powerful instrument for constructive foreign policy in this hungry world -- and it is an instrument that is almost exclusively American.

Moreover, we no longer have to depend only on what is left over in the historic struggle to feed this world's exploding population. The Food for Freedom Act

gives us ~~a virtually open ended~~ authority to ^{produce food to help feed} ~~assist~~

^{to help feed} nations that are willing to help themselves.

We are now sending American food to more than a hundred nations under Food for Freedom. I am

happy to say that food shipments to Indonesia, a brave and growing nation which I have just visited, will now receive a new, higher priority. ^{Indonesian} ^{Last year Bigger ever} ^{To India}

But the opportunities and the challenge of the War on Hunger are going to grow steadily in the foreseeable

future, and this nation must be ready.

∟ We are ready to make full use of our abundance and we must be ready to pay the American farmers -- the "soldiers of the soil" Bill Thatcher refers to -- a fair price for their contribution to world peace and stability.

∟ This country has an effective Food for Freedom program and it can afford a bigger one in the future.

∟ Food for Freedom is good politics. "A hungry people listens not to reason, nor cares for justice, nor is bent by prayers" says an ancient text.

∟ There can be no peace, no stability, no safety in this nuclear age until the ancient enemy of hunger has been banished from the earth. *[where constant Kant no peace]*

∟ Food for Freedom is good economics. It means substantially more income for the American farmer.

It means that the American taxpayers will stop paying to keep valuable agricultural resources idle. It can mean prosperous nations abroad that will be an expanding market for American food and factory production in the future.

And Food for Freedom is good morals. When a child starves because the world's elders cannot figure out how to feed him, each of us bears the burden of guilt.

Here is point ^{number} two in my Honest Deal for Rural America.

It is true -- ~~and as a small town boy I hate~~ ~~to say it~~ -- that rural America is still behind the rest of the nation.

More than twice as many farm families as compared to city families live below the poverty level.

Less than half of our farm families have a decent house, a good car, hot and cold running water, and

We are
moving
to
Food
for
Freedom

#2

a telephone; in the city, three out of four have these advantages.

↳ These deficiencies are especially important to rural youngsters who are about to choose a career and a place to live.

↳ For every 175 rural youngsters who reach working age, there are fewer than 100 jobs.

↳ About 200 thousand of the young Americans living in rural areas today will leave and go into the city this year.

↳ Their departure will make rural America a poorer place. ↳ Their leaving will not only separate them from their families but weaken our rural communities -- weaken them culturally as well as economically.

↳ And for what? What is waiting for them?
Some will find fame and fortune. Many more of them

will find themselves confined to slums....doomed to low-paying jobs....isolated, lonesome and hopeless.

America is caught in the Urbanization Trap in the last third of the twentieth century.

70%
Seventy per cent of us already live on 1 per cent of the land. //

We are going to have another 100 million Americans by the end of this century, and all of them will live in the cities if present trends continue.

Our cities are starved for space, fresh air, recreation; our rural areas are starved for jobs and opportunity.

This society is rich enough and creative enough to achieve a balance of growth and opportunity between rural and urban areas. — and we are on the move!

In the 1930's, modernization meant rural electrification

REA

and movie theatres in every town.

L In the 1940's it meant many well-paved roads.

L Now, it means airports capable of handling
short-hop jets, community colleges, modern hospitals

and good doctors, the very best in elementary and
secondary education. It means ~~self control~~ ^{Swimming Pools} and

ballparks. *Yes it means industry - it* means drama groups and art classes in
addition to church socials.

And it means economic ~~stability~~ ^{vitality} -- new investment,
new job opportunities, a growing tax base. It means
modern America in your town -- your county.

That kind of modernization is occurring in many
parts of rural America today.

Where it happens, it is the result of aggressive
local initiative, cooperation from private industries, and

Government
better use of ~~federal~~ programs that are already available.

It happens because rural people and city people alike are discovering that the good life can be found in the countryside.

∟ I saw a poll taken right here in Minnesota just the other day. 88% Eighty-eight per cent of those questioned favored special measures to encourage farm families to stay on the farm. 84% Eighty-four per cent supported programs to encourage industry to move out to the small towns.

∟ A majority said they would prefer to live on a farm rather than in the city.

∟ I say, let's all do our part to give them a real choice!

∟ But the countryside cannot grow without prosperous farms.

#3 So point three is this: Protect and improve our

REA & RTA Loans during these
Past 4 years -
\$1,700,000,000

~~30% increase~~

① ^{annex some administration}
FHA Loans
1960
\$307,832,179

FHA
1967
\$1,390,087,829

existing commodity program ^{5.} ~~It~~ ^{they are} is the best we have ever had.

~~As we gain experience in the sophisticated supply-~~
~~management techniques required by elimination of~~
~~surpluses, the program will prove its value over and~~
~~over again.~~

Government payments are already providing the thin margin between profit and loss for many ^{farm} producers.

This year ^{our} ~~the~~ program ^{are} ~~is~~ paying ~~the~~ ^{and} producers an additional 48 cents a bushel on wheat, 12 cents a bushel on corn, ~~and 15 cents for each pound of cotton.~~

Until we develop a weather-proof acreage allotment system we are going to experience crops that exceed our expectations and we are going to need protection. I think we have it.

It is true that ^{market} ~~the~~ prices are down this year. After steady progress since 1960, we are in a "lag" year, largely

Harvests

-15-

because of phenomenal growing weather that brought
unprecedented harvests in almost every nation

Here in the United States grain harvests were 34

per cent higher this year than the average for the

past five years.

*and the best information available
to us gave no indication this would happen*

I know that some interpret this as proof of

a fatal flaw in the system.

Let me only say this to you: Progress is seldom
smooth. It usually comes in a series of forward
thrusts followed by temporary lapses. Today, while
the farmer is being short-changed, he still has

something to protect

delete
as a result of this, your farm programs are under attack.

And protect he must. For the programs that have

given us progress in the past and promise more in the

future are *being condemned.*
~~under attack~~ No fewer than 21 bills have

been introduced in Congress which would, for all practical purposes, ~~terminate~~ ^{Bushy} existing farm programs.

~~Don't think those calls for retreat will be stilled by the time this program we all fought so hard for back in 1965 runs out in 1969.~~

↳ We got a taste of what can happen two weeks ago when legislation to establish a strategic grain reserve was killed in ^a sub-committee. *of the House of Reps.*

↳ That bill would have let us withdraw grain stocks from the commercial market when prices were low. It would have protected the consumer in

times of scarcity. It would have helped the producer by substantially increasing wheat, corn and soybean prices.

↳ I can tell you that it was not killed by people who had the farmers' interest at heart. *It was killed by the same old gang.*

↳ This country needs reserves of key agricultural commodities. It needs a program that will keep those reserves at common-sense, clearly defined levels.... that

specifies how and when they can be released so that

they do not interfere with the normal market. *In other words, the reserves would be insulated from the market.*

It needs a program that will depend on private ~~and that means HTA -~~ sector (inventories for normal business operations) but

at the same time protect both consumer and producer.

∟ The harsh truth is, my friends, ~~that~~ there are people in this country, today who want ~~the kind of~~ *and in Congress*

~~unrestrained~~ production that could destroy the farm economy. *The Factory*

The experts tell us that without our present programs, prices would fall by ~~a third~~ *at least a third.*

∟ I don't have to spell out the likely consequences — not only for individual farm families, but for the prospects of rural America and for America's agricultural leadership in the world. ~~It~~

∟ It would be tempting to say that extension and better management of our existing programs will solve all the farmer's problems. But it won't.

#4 < That brings me to point four -- bargaining power.
~~Even the general public understands that farmers~~
are not now in a position to decide the prices they
get for their products.

< Look at the language of commerce. We say
the hardware store charges 39 cents for a pound of
nails, General Motors charges 3 thousand dollars for a car.

< But the farmer, who also produces and sells
things, gets five dollars and sixty-one cents, blend,
for his milk, or gets 29 dollars for his fat cattle.

< The farmer deserves the right to charge for his
products instead of getting what the buyer decides
he should have.

< Moreover, most economic power in America is
organized. ~~Labor is organized, business is organized,~~
~~and~~ ^{for their equipment} farmers pay more because industry's bargaining

power is organized.

labor is organized

and Industrial workers deserve the gains that they have won with concentrated economic power -- but the farmer deserves parallel gains. He deserves more.
He deserves to catch up.

delete [~~The farmer is tired of being whipsawed by the organized elements in the rest of the economy.~~]

∠ The plain facts are that farmers need bargaining power. They have the desire -- and they should have the right -- to get firm control of their own economic destiny.

that is what we mean by free enterprise.

~~Competition is a great American tradition but so is equity.~~

∠ If American farmers are going to get equity, they are going to have to bargain.

∠ President Johnson, Secretary Freeman and I are

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 4, 1967

Dear Mr. Thatcher:

I have intended for some time to thank you for so many services to our nation -- each of which the Vice President has reported to me in admiring detail.

Your leadership and patriotism are qualities that inspire our country no less than they sustain and strengthen me.

I would welcome an opportunity to express my gratitude, and hear your views, in person. Perhaps we could visit when the Vice President returns from Asia. If you could suggest a convenient date, I would be happy to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Lyndon B. Johnson", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mr. William Thatcher
Manager and Executive Director
Farmers Union Grain
Terminal Association
St. Paul, Minnesota

going to do our best to see that you have the right
to bargain. President Johnson has asked Bill Thatcher
to come to Washington to discuss his bargaining proposals
with him in detail, including a National Agricultural
Relations Act. (Thatcher Letter) I asked Bill for letter

< ~~It will not be easy for thousands of independent
producers to bargain effectively, but organized labor
had its own catalogue of so-called impossibilities, most of
which have been realized.~~

< And you will have one important asset working for
you -- the experience and accomplishments of the
great American cooperative movement. The Farmers' Union
G.T.A., the Central Exchange, and the other farm
cooperatives of this country have long been a powerful force
for economic justice in America -- justice for the farmer, the consumer
justice for the country.

✓ Your achievements have been an example to cooperative movements in ~~the developing countries~~

~~of~~ Asia and Latin America which are now bringing political freedom and economic justice to millions for the first time.

✓ I am confident that successful bargaining will be your next great victory.

and this administration joins you as a partner.

Time
✓ Today I have given you the plain facts as I see them.

✓ Our debt to the American farmer is great -- and it has not been ~~repaid~~ *fully repaid*.

✓ Our progress in recent years has been substantial -- but much remains to be done.

✓ Our government and its programs now provide the farmer with an essential margin of protection -- although it does not guarantee him prosperity.

⌞ The farmer is entitled to the bargaining power
enjoyed by others in our economy -- no more and
no less.

⌞ The problems of our cities and those of rural
America are in reality a single national problem
that demands the attention of us all.

⌞ Food power used in the War on Hunger is America's
special weapon in the ~~quest~~ ^{search} for peace.

⌞ Let's raise the banner here and now: AN HONEST
DEAL FOR RURAL AMERICA.

⌞ Let's close the Prosperity Gap once and for all.

⌞ Let this be one America, under God, with liberty,
justice, and a fair share for all.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Those who labor in the earth are chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people."

If ever there were a chosen farmer, it is the
American farmer. May this nation honor him
accordingly — *honor him with
economic justice — and
Honest Deal.*

ORIGINAL COPY

ADDRESS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
TO
FARMERS UNION GRAIN TERMINAL ASSOCIATION

St. Paul, Minnesota

November 16, 1967

By JOHN R. BRENNAN
CHRISTOPHER L. COLUMBUS & ASSOCIATES
COURT REPORTERS
720 COMMERCE BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101
224-5415

1
2 ADDRESS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
3 TO
4 FARMERS UNION GRAIN TERMINAL ASSOCIATION
5

6 St. Paul, Minnesota
7 November 16, 1967
8
9 - - -

10
11 Thank you, thank you very much; not only my friend
12 but the friend of everyone in this great Auditorium
13 tonight and of the hundreds of thousands of people of
14 America, the General Manager, and that real soldier of
15 the soil, Bill Thatcher, God bless you. It is wonderful
16 to be here (applause.)

17 Governor LeVander and Lieutenant Governor Getts;
18 two very great and distinguished Senators from the State
19 of Minnesota, Senator McCarthy and Senator Mondale, and
20 those two great and distinguished Senators from North
21 Dakota, Senator Young and Senator Burdick, and I can think
22 of the other Senators of the states represented here
23 tonight, members of Congress, that I wish could be with
24 us because let me say that they work for you sincerely,
25 honestly, with great dedication, and you have all had the

1 privilege tonight to hear from four of them.

2 I have had the rare privilege of being their
3 friend. I served for many years on the Committee on
4 Agriculture with my friend, Senator Young. There were
5 times when people said our politics was different,
6 it was rather difficult to find out, but I can tell you
7 that when it came to agriculture, we voted alike 100
8 per cent. (Applause)

9 It goes without saying, and yet it needs to be
10 said, that there have been no more faithful friends,
11 and not only faithful but affectionate friends to the
12 Midwest, to rural America, to this Nation, in every aspect,
13 than the four Senators who are here tonight, and I am
14 particularly proud to be with the Senators Burdick and
15 Mondale and McCarthy, Young, on this occasion.

16 Mayor Byrne, you welcome us once again to this
17 great Capitol City, and I know that one of the blessings
18 that St. Paul really enjoys is the annual GTA Convention.
19 When I was the Mayor of that sister city across the river,
20 we used to sort of declare a day of mourning every time
21 that they had GTA in St. Paul. Now, of course, I must take
22 a much more worldly point of view on these things and I
23 do not choose up sides, and I notice the Mayor of
24 Minneapolis didn't dare come over tonight (laughter).

25 Well, first of all, Bill, may I say, I haven't had

1 such a good offer for years (applause), and I want to
2 thank you, and in light of what I sometimes hear and
3 all too often read, you may see me (laughter).

4 I am sort of like the farmer, you know, my future
5 is uncertain. I know not what the political weather
6 will be or how the harvest will come in, but like the
7 farmer, hope springs eternally in my breast (applause).

8 And I want my friend, Gene, to know that I, too,
9 miss Ezra (laughter). Those were happy days, days of
10 rhetoric and little responsibility. My, how I miss those
11 (laughter and applause).

12 Bill Thatcher is like good wine, he's better with
13 age. I want to tell you that if Geritol wants to get a
14 man of distinction to put in their ad, they should take
15 one of Bill (applause).

16 I am so pleased to see our great National President
17 of the Farmers Union, Tony Deschant, here tonight;
18 welcome him once again. He is a great help to all of us.
19 My life -- literally life-long friend, at least, the life-
20 long friend of our family, Emil Loriks, and when I see
21 Emil and know what he has done, well, my heart wells up
22 with great emotion; a friend of my fathers', my family,
23 my friend.

24 I want to talk to you tonight about a letter that
25 I received from Bill Thatcher (applause and laughter).

1 Darn, if he didn't drop it off someplace. Oh, we are
2 going to have a little fun this evening.

3 You know I have had the privilege to take part in
4 a lot of these annual conventions of GTA, this great and
5 respected American Agricultural Cooperative Association,
6 and Bill said 17 years. I was counting it up and I think
7 it was 18 years, but 17 or 18 I have been here, but I am
8 especially pleased and relieved to be here this year because
9 I have been reading those farm belt polls, those public
10 opinion polls of what farmers think about some of us,
11 and I wasn't sure that my invitation was still in good
12 standing, but I should have known that Bill Thatcher and
13 Emil Loriks, and Tony Deschant, and the GTA Board, are
14 good friends in lean years and in good years, and I won't
15 know just exactly which it is until next year.

16 I was beginning to feel like that industrialist
17 who suddenly became ill and went to the hospital, Bill,
18 he lay there for weeks. No visitors came. No messages
19 were delivered. And then one day he got a card, from the
20 labor union that represented his employees, and the card
21 read, "The Executive Committee of Local 246 wishes you
22 a speedy recovery, by a vote of 8 to 7." (Laughter)

23 Well, I just took advantage of the odds tonight,
24 but I am not here to poll your convention, and when I do,
25 I will get outside the gate in the time-honored tradition

1 of the Farmers Union; nor am I here to ask your support
2 on the historic issues of our times, although that
3 support has never been lacking from the great and
4 patriotic people that are in this assembly hall this
5 evening (applause).

6 I am here to talk about the problem that has
7 already been outlined and discussed with great clarity,
8 the problem of greatest personal concern to you and your
9 organization, and of great personal concern to me with
10 quite a long period of public service, with concern for
11 agriculture, and I am here to talk about the future of
12 the American farmer, not the past, and what that future
13 means to America.

14 Now, it has been said, but it needs to be repeated,
15 that American agriculture ranks among the broadest
16 achievements of mankind and, yet, too many of our fellow
17 Americans don't know it.

18 If you look around, or if you look at America,
19 at this great Nation, from abroad, as I have recently, you
20 see one thing above all others in your mind's eye. You
21 see not only these tall buildings of our cities, not only
22 these broad highways, not just shiny appliances, nor great
23 rockets or laboratories, but you see broad and fertile
24 fields pouring forth their production through the amazing
25 miracle of a modern American agriculture. This is what you

1 think about as you go through the parched lands as I did
2 just a little over a week and a half ago tonight in central
3 Java, Indonesia, an area that has been afflicted by
4 exploitation and drought. I thought of Minnesota, North
5 Dakota, South Dakota, this great Midwest, Montana, Wyoming,
6 Wisconsin.

7 You see farms which produce plenty in America, in
8 a world in which most people do not have enough to eat.
9 You see space-age agriculture in a world where many
10 cultivators still rely on the wooden plow.

11 I saw 20,000 young men in Indonesia cleaning out
12 irrigation ditches with shovels and hoes, the most
13 primitive of instruments, and yet my mind's eyes couldn't
14 help but think of the great land and earth-moving equipment
15 in America and the broad fields and fertile plains, and
16 in your mind's eye you see an America that depends on
17 agriculture exports for half of its stable balance of
18 trade, a thought and a fact that goes all too often
19 unnoticed.

20 Now, you know that America, because of its
21 agriculture, can foster world peace and relieve human
22 suffering by providing food and fiber, as has been
23 described here tonight, to hundreds of millions of people
24 all around the world, and we have; while at the same time
25 it exports its technology, its know-how, to the poor

1 nations so that they, in turn, might be able to provide
2 for themselves.

3 That is what you think about when you are a long
4 ways away and you see the misery of others, but then you
5 return home and the picture is different. You see, as I
6 have, Americans by the thousands leaving our farms and
7 our rural areas; yes, at the rate of half a million or
8 more a year, not because they want to, not because they
9 want to live in a crowded and congested city.

10 I left New York City this afternoon after 3:00
11 and battled that traffic trying to get to the airport,
12 gasping for one breath of fresh air, but you see Americans
13 leaving these farms of ours because they think they have to
14 in order to provide an economic opportunity that will
15 afford a future for themselves and their children.

16 Even so, with all of this, my friends, as has been
17 said tonight, we have made substantial progress in these
18 past years, in these past seven years.

19 The mammoth surpluses of the 1950s that were
20 talked about that hung over the markets like a sword,
21 which influenced that market and threatened to scuttle
22 support for any constructive farm program, have been
23 diminished and in some areas eliminated.

24 I remember how we wrestled with that problem.

25 Net farm income, not nearly what it ought to be,

1 and yet it is up 70 per cent in the seven years since
2 1960, and today we have some basic tools that you helped
3 design, that this congressman and these senators helped
4 make possible, the Food and Agricultural Act of 1965,
5 which didn't come easily, which came after three attempts
6 to get it, and the Food for Peace and the Food for Freedom
7 Act of 1966, these helped the farmer and enabled us to
8 better meet our objectives at home and abroad.

9 Now, those programs reduced the painful market
10 fluctuations that have hurt us so much this summer and
11 fall from becoming an unmanageable cycle of boom and bust,
12 and I see people in this audience that remember that cycle
13 of boom and bust, but now this isn't enough for me and
14 I know it isn't enough for you.

15 To say that it is a little better or little worse
16 doesn't settle anything. The American farmer, frankly,
17 deserves better, the Nation owes it to him. He deserves
18 equity, and I thought tonight I would try to suggest at
19 least four ways in which we can assure him that equity,
20 and they add up, to me, for an honest deal for rural
21 America and that is all the American farmer is asking for;
22 not a fast shuffle of the deck, not a special privilege,
23 not a stacked deck, but an honest deal.

24 First, we must continue to escalate the war on
25 hunger. That is one war that we can afford to escalate

1 without any controversy (applause).

2 Food is now recognized as a most powerful and
3 constructive tool in foreign policy in this hungry world
4 and it is an instrument that is almost exclusively
5 American. Moreover, we no longer have to depend on just
6 what is left over in this historic struggle to feed this
7 world's exploding population.

8 The Food for Freedom Act of 1966 changed that
9 concept, not merely to take what was left over, but,
10 indeed, to even plan your needs. The Food for Freedom
11 Act gives us the authority to produce food to help feed
12 nations that are willing to help themselves, and we are
13 now sending food to more than a hundred nations under
14 the Food for Freedom program, and last year was the biggest
15 operation in Food for Peace that we have ever known in
16 the history of this country. Hundreds of millions of
17 bushels of wheat sent far away to feed millions of hungry
18 people, thousands of bales of cotton and millions of
19 of pounds of oil, and I am happy to say that food shipments
20 are on the way right now to needy countries.

21 They are on the way now tonight to a country that
22 I just left, to Indonesia; rice, vegetable oil, bull
23 durham wheat, and that country that I saw literally in
24 shambles after years of exploitations, self-indulgence by
25 a self-styled leader, and communist ideology, that nation

1 tonight hangs on with the thin thread of life because
2 American food makes possible a freedom to live (applause).

3 And I want to make it clear tonight that the
4 President of the United States has authorized and directed
5 those who are responsible for the Food for Freedom and
6 Food for Peace program to step up our shipments to help
7 this hungry world and thereby to help ourselves; but the
8 opportunities and the challenge of war on hunger are
9 going to steadily grow in the foreseeable future, and this
10 nation must be ready.

11 We are ready to make full use of our abundance
12 and we must be ready to pay the American farmer, the
13 soldiers of the soil that Bill Thatcher refers to, pay him
14 a fair price for their contribution to world peace and
15 stability.

16 Food for Freedom is good politics. "A hungry
17 people listens not to reason, nor cares for justice, nor
18 is bent by prayers," says an ancient text.

19 There can be no peace, no stability. There can
20 be no safety in this nuclear age until that ancient
21 enemy of mankind called hunger has been banished from
22 the earth.

23 The late and beloved Pope John XXIII said that
24 where there is constant want, there is no peace, and
25 possibly those who are so dedicated to the cause of peace,

1 as we all should be, will remember that the Scripture
2 says, "Blessed are the peace makers." Not the talkers or
3 ever the walkers, but the peace makers, and food help
4 maketh the peace that man longs for.

5 Food for Freedom is good economics. It means
6 more income for the American farmer, and if it is properly
7 used, it means a better price, it means, also, that the
8 American taxpayers will not have to pay to keep valuable
9 agriculture resources idle, and it can mean prosperous
10 nations abroad that will provide an expanding market for
11 American food and factory production in the future and
12 that is what we have to look for, that is the purpose of
13 our foreign aid program, that is what we are seeking to do;
14 not merely to relieve human suffering, worldly as that is,
15 but to help build a world economy that can absorb the
16 production of an educated and productive people.

17 Finally, Food for Freedom is good morals. When a
18 child starves because the nations' elders cannot figure
19 out how to feed him, how to feed that child, each of
20 us bears a burden of the guilt.

21 So we have good politics, good economics and good
22 morals in one program, and I am here to say that this
23 great agricultural audience, and an audience of fellow
24 Americans, that your Nation is not shirking in its duty on
25 this front, on the contrary.

1 Within the past few weeks, vast shipments have
2 been authorized for Asia, for Africa, for Latin America,
3 to help people and to help American agriculture.

4 Now, here is point number two in my program of
5 equity and an honest deal for rural America. I know that
6 it is true that rural America is still behind much of
7 the rest of the Nation.

8 More than twice as many farm families, as compared
9 to city families, live below the poverty line. You hear
10 a lot about poverty these days, the War on Poverty.
11 The greatest area of poverty is in rural America, not in
12 our cities. In the cities, it is concentrated but in
13 the vast expanse of the Nation, it has to be found in
14 greater amount in rural America. Less than half of our
15 farm families have a decent house, a good car, hot or cold
16 running water and a telephone. In the city, three out of
17 four families have these advantages.

18 Now, these deficiencies that I refer to are
19 especially important to our rural young people who are
20 about to choose a career and a place to live, and the
21 great threat to American agriculture today is the fact that
22 the young people are leaving.

23 For every 175 rural young people who are reaching
24 the working age, they find an opportunity only for 100
25 jobs. 175 looking, 100 openings available.

1 About 200 thousand of our young people living
2 in rural America will leave this year and go to the city.
3 Their departure will make rural America a poorer place.
4 Their leaving will not only separate them from their
5 families but will weaken our rural communities, weaken
6 them culturally as well as economically, and for what?
7 What is waiting for them?

8 Well, some will find fame and fortune, to be sure,
9 but I can tell you what most of them will find, they will
10 find themselves confined to a city that is already over-
11 crowded, some of them to slums, some doomed to low-paying
12 jobs, some of them isolated and lonesome and hopeless.

13 You see, America is caught in a trap of urbaniza-
14 tion today. 70 per cent of the people live on 1 per cent
15 of the land -- 70 per cent of the people live on 1 per cent
16 of the land, and we are going to have another 100 million
17 Americans in the next 33 years -- another 100 million.
18 Where are they going to live? Our cities are already
19 starved for space, fresh air, recreation. Our rural areas
20 are starved for jobs and opportunity and income.

21 This society, my fellow Americans, is rich enough,
22 and I think it is creative enough, to achieve a proper
23 balance between urban growth and opportunity, or growth
24 and opportunity between rural and urban areas.

25 I will put it another way. Any nation that has

1 the know-how and the resources to be able to put a man
2 on the moon ought to be able to help put a man on his
3 feet right here on earth. (Applause) That ought to be
4 done.

5 Now, in the 1930's, modernization meant REA.
6 In the 1940's, modernization in rural America meant
7 hard-surface roads.

8 In the 1960's and 1970's, well, it means much more
9 than that. It means all of that. It means airports and
10 community colleges and modern hospitals, good doctors,
11 businesses and factories. Yes, it even means cultural
12 activities, and it means, also, socials, church socials.
13 It means economic vitality, new investments and new job
14 opportunities, a growing tax base. It means modern
15 America in your town and in your country.

16 Now, that kind of modernization is occurring in
17 some parts of our land in rural America, and when it does,
18 it comes because of aggressive local leadership, people
19 working together, government and cooperatives, government
20 and farmers and workers and city people pulling together.

21 Now, I saw a poll taken here in Minnesota just a
22 short time ago. 88 per cent of those questioned favored
23 special measures to encourage farm families to stay on the
24 farms. 84 per cent of those polled in that poll supported
25 the programs to encourage industry to move out to the

1 smaller communities.

2 I think the American people expect a wholesome
3 change in this country. They expect to see America develop
4 everyplace, not just some places. A majority of people
5 said they preferred to live in the country rather than
6 the city. So I say, let's do our part to give these
7 people a real choice, but the countryside cannot grow just
8 by memories of fresh air and flowers and sunlight, the
9 countryside cannot grow without prosperous farms.

10 So point number three in my program for equity
11 and an honest deal, protect and improve our existing
12 farm programs. They are not all they should be, but let
13 me tell you, we fought hard to get them, they are the best
14 we have ever had.

15 I looked at credit loans, for example, today,
16 just an hour before I came over here. In 1960 the Farmers'
17 Home Administration loaned or guaranteed loans in the
18 sum of 307 million dollars.

19 In 1967, fiscal year 1967, the Farmers' Home
20 Administration guaranteed loans to rural America in the
21 sum of one billion, three hundred ninety million dollars.
22 No, it isn't all it should be, but let me tell you, it is
23 pointed in the right direction.

24 Government payments that have been talked about
25 here are just really providing the thin margin between

1 profit and loss for many farmers and all too often not
2 profit. This year our programs are paying producers and
3 additional 48 cents a bushel on wheat, those that are
4 under the program, 12 cents on corn.

5 Now, until we can develop a weatherproof acreage
6 allotment system, we are going to experience crops that
7 exceed our expectations and we are going to need a lot of
8 protection. It is true that market prices are down this
9 year. You don't need to be told, you know.

10 After steady progress for several years we got a
11 lag here on our hands and, why? Because of the phenomenal
12 growing weather throughout the world, two bumper crops
13 worldwide.

14 This year in grains alone, 34 per cent increase in
15 our crops as compared to the average of the last five years.
16 Now, we didn't plan it that way. That is one thing I
17 forgot to take into consideration when I talked to you
18 last year.

19 The best information that we had available didn't
20 assure us that this would be the case. As a result, this
21 year, farm programs were under attack. The programs that
22 have given us some progress in the past and promise more
23 in the future are being condemned.

24 More than 21 bills are now in Congress that would,
25 for all practical purposes, destroy existing farm programs.

1 We got a taste of what will happen just two weeks
2 ago when one bill in the House of Representatives sub-
3 committee, a bill to design a strategic grain reserve,
4 was killed, a bill that this organization supported.

5 That bill could have let us withdraw surplus grain
6 stocks from the commercial market when prices were low.
7 It would have protected the consumer in times of scarcity.
8 It would have helped the producer by substantially
9 increasing wheat, corn and soy bean prices.

10 I can't tell you -- yes, I can tell you, that it
11 was killed by the people who do not have the farmers'
12 interests at heart. It was killed by the same old gang
13 that we have seen operating all too often.

14 Now, this country needs reserves of key agricultural
15 commodities. With our responsibilities at home and abroad,
16 it is folly, it is dangerous, not to have those reserves.
17 It needs a program that will keep these reserves in a
18 common sense, clearly defined level that specifies how
19 and when they can be released so that they do not interfere
20 with the normal market, so that there is no dumping.

21 In other words, the reserves, as Bill Thatcher
22 puts it, must be insulated from the market and made
23 real reserves under careful control.

24 This nation needs a program that will depend upon
25 the private sector, and this means GTA, depend upon the

1 inventories for normal business operations, but at the
2 same time protect both the producer and the consumer.

3 The harsh truth is, my friends, there are people
4 in this country and in this Congress who want unrestrained
5 production and that would destroy the farm economy. The
6 facts are that without our present programs, prices would
7 fall at least a third, and I don't have to spell out the
8 consequences of that.

9 Now, I know that it would be tempting to tell you
10 tonight that the extension and the management of our
11 existing programs, just to improve them a little would
12 solve the farmers' problems, but it won't, and we just
13 might as well face it. These programs are not that far-
14 reaching.

15 That brings me to point four. It brings me to
16 Dr. Thatcher's proposal that -- and that is what I call it,
17 Dr. William Thatcher's prescription for agricultural
18 equity and economic justice -- bargaining power.

19 The farmers are not now in a position to decide
20 prices they get for their product, farm program or no
21 farm program. Look at the language in business in Congress
22 today. Just look at this. We say the hardware store
23 charges 39 cents for a pound of nails. General Motors
24 charges \$3,000 for a car, but the farmer, who also produces
25 and sells things, the language says, he gets \$5.61 blend,

1 or whatever it is, or \$4.60 for his milk, he gets \$26 or
2 \$27 or \$25 for his cattle.

3 The farmer deserves the right to charge, charge
4 just like General Motors, for his products instead of
5 getting like a supplicant or a begger, getting what the
6 buyer decides that he should have, and that is what
7 bargaining is all about, whether you can charge for your
8 services and your products or whether you have to stand
9 back and beg for a fair price, and it is up to you.

10 Most economic power in America is organized. Now,
11 there is no use in saying you don't like it because it
12 is there, it won't change it a bit because you said you
13 don't like it. Farmers pay more for their equipment because
14 industry bargaining power is organized, labor is organized.
15 I think about everything is organized except the people
16 I am talking to, and do the industrial workers deserve the
17 gains that they have won through their economic power,
18 but the farmer deserves parallel gains, and if he doesn't
19 the economy is out of balance.

20 He deserves more and he deserves to catch up, and
21 the longer you wait, the longer it is going to take to
22 catch up.

23 Now, the plain facts are that farmers need
24 bargaining power. They have a desire. They should have
25 the right to get firm control of their own economic

1 destiny. That is what you mean when you talk about
2 free enterprise, that is the whole definition.

3 Now, if the American farmers are going to get
4 equity, they are going to have to bargain. President
5 Johnson, Secretary Freeman, the Vice President of the
6 United States, members of the Congress here, are determined
7 to do our best to see that you get that right to bargain.

8 The President has already directed a Special
9 Task Force in the Department of Agriculture to examine
10 into the whole concept of bargaining, and President
11 Johnson has asked Bill Thatcher to come down to Washington
12 to discuss his bargaining proposals with him in detail,
13 and when I came in here tonight, I called him ahead of
14 time and I said, "I want you to bring me that letter that
15 I know you got from the President because, you know, I
16 have found out that you got a letter," and I got Bill
17 Thatcher's secretary to make sure that letter was over
18 here, and I took it right out of his pocket, so help me,
19 when I came in the door, and it says, "Dear Mr. Thatcher --"
20 dated November 4 -- "I have intended for some time to
21 thank you for so many services to our Nation." Each of
22 which the Vice President has reported to me in admiring
23 detail, I will gladly put that in the letter -- (laughter)
24 "Your leadership and patronage are qualities that inspire
25 our country no less than they sustain and strengthen me.

1 I would welcome an opportunity to express my gratitude
2 and hear your views in person. Perhaps we could visit
3 when the Vice President returns from Asia --" Well, I am
4 home, Bill -- "and if you can suggest a convenient date,
5 I would be happy to arrange a meeting.

6 "Sincerely yours, Lyndon B. Johnson."

7 So we are going to have a talk. (Applause)

8 Might I add that we have got a good start in this
9 bargaining. We have got Senator Mondale, who has promised
10 here tonight that he will take and introduce the first
11 measure, and we have got the backing of the GTA and the
12 Central Exchange and many other cooperatives in this
13 country that have already increased the economic power
14 of American Agriculture, and I am confident that successful
15 bargaining will be our next great victory.

16 It won't come easy, it isn't going to happen
17 overnight. I can't tell you that it will be here next
18 year, but I can tell you this, you will never win a fight
19 until you start one and you will never gain your objective
20 unless you point to it, and I suggest tonight that you start
21 to mobilize your resources now to get what you deserve and
22 to get what you better have for yourselves. Don't depend
23 on others, depend on yourselves plus a friendly government,
24 and if you do that, you will have bargaining just exactly
25 as industry does, just as Walter Reuther does, just

1 as Bill Thatcher wants it, and then you will start to
2 have some balance in the American economy (applause.)

3 My friends of GTA, my fellow Americans, this
4 administration joins you in this effort. I am here to
5 tell you that.

6 Now, I have given you the plain facts as I see
7 them. It hasn't been a rosy picture. I didn't come to
8 tell you that you never had it so good. I came to tell
9 you what was in my heart.

10 Our debt to the American farmers is great and it
11 has not been fully repaid. Our progress in recent years
12 has been substantial but much more remains to be done.

13 Our government and its programs now provide the
14 farmer with an essential margin of protection but it does
15 not guarantee prosperity. The farmer is entitled to
16 bargaining power enjoyed by others in our economy; no more,
17 no less.

18 The problems of our cities and those of rural
19 America are, in reality, a single national problem that
20 demands the attention of all of us. Food power used in the
21 war on hunger is America's special weapon for the search
22 for peace and social justice. This is what I told you
23 tonight. Every bit of this is within our grasp. Some of it
24 we are already doing, the rest we can do.

25 So I come to this great audience in my home state

1 to say, let's raise a banner here now, let's have our
2 own demonstration, here and now. Let's have equity for
3 agriculture. Let's have an honest deal for rural America.
4 Let's close the prosperity gap once and for all.
5 Let this America be one America, under God, with liberty
6 and justice and a fair share for all. That is a mighty
7 good pledge.

8 Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Those who labor in the
9 earth are the chosen people of God, if he ever had a
10 chosen people." I speak to the chosen people. If there
11 ever were a chosen farmer, it is the American farmer,
12 and I pray that this Nation may honor him accordingly --
13 not honor him with a badge or a ceremony, not honor him
14 with words or oratory, but to honor him with what he
15 deserves, a fair chance, an honest deal, economic justice.
16 To do that is to do right. To do less is to do wrong,
17 and I join the battle, Mr. Thatcher, and GTA, I join it
18 willfully and hopefully because I know that working
19 together there isn't any force in this country that
20 can stop us or defeat us if we resolve to win this fight,
21 and let's start it tonight, from this great Auditorium here
22 in this great State of Minnesota with some of the finest
23 people that this Nation has ever known.

24 The fight for what? For a better day for rural
25 America, for young Americans in rural America, for people

1 that live in every one of our towns and villages and
2 farms; start it now and in the years to come, and it won't
3 be long, you will look back on this night and say, it was
4 then that farmers in America resolved that they, too,
5 would share equitably in the American abundance and the
6 American prosperity.

7 Thank you very much.

8 (Standing ovation.)
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25





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