

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF GRAIN COOPERATIVES
SPRING CONFERENCE

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REMARKS OF
HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

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Washington, D. C.

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16 - - -

17 3:45 p.m.

18 Wednesday, April 3, 1968

19 Mayflower Hotel

20 Washington, D. C.

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1 MR. THATCHER: This is an historic hour in
2 the history of our Nation and it is a great moment in the his-
3 tory of the Federation, that we can have this opportunity to
4 hear this great official of this Nation.

5 With the permission of the Vice President -- he said
6 take all the time you want -- I will be very brief -- but I
7 did want to say that I have had a close and almost an intimate
8 relationship with this friend for twenty years. This is the
9 gentleman who pushed through the original resolution of the
10 Democratic Party for civil rights for all of the citizens of
11 this Nation.

12 He has been a great supporter of labor. He is a
13 great supporter of business people. He is a great supporter
14 of people. And there is no man in the land who has worked
15 harder in the halls of Congress on the platform for full
16 rights for the American farmer than the Vice President of the
17 United States.

18 (Applause.)

19 This is not a political meeting, but we had a vacuum
20 -- for lack of a better word -- that has left this Nation
21 stunned in its political life, one that grieves many people,
22 most people agree.

23 You can look at the field as I look at the field.
24 My prayer is that this man will eventually be chosen President
25 of the United States -- the Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey.

1 (Applause.)

2 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, my dear friends,
3 whenever you're a bit tired and weary and concerned or in any
4 way distressed, the best thing in the world to do is to have
5 your best friend introduce you and you get a totally unbiased
6 point of view.

7 (Laughter.)

8 You know, I've said many times, but I will repeat
9 it again, my old friend, very dear and beloved friend, Adlai
10 Stevenson once said that flattery is all right if you don't
11 inhale it.

12 (Laughter.)

13 And Roy Hendrickson said to me, as Bill Thatcher
14 was introducing me, why are you breathing so deeply?

15 (Laughter.)

16 Because I was inhaling every word you had to say.

17 (Laughter.)

18 And after hearing what he said about me, I can hardly
19 wait to hear what I am going to say to you.

20 (Laughter.)

21 Well, I came by as what they call a "drop-in" --
22 not a drop-out but a "drop-in." I came by today once again to
23 be with friends that I have known through the years of public
24 service and to meet with the leaders of the National Federation
25 of Grain Cooperatives, to meet with you in your annual

1 meeting. I guess we've been doing this at least for sixteen,
2 seventeen or eighteen years here. If you're not tired of me,
3 I surely am not tired of you. I'm perfectly willing to stick
4 around this town a long time and meet with you.

5 (Laughter, applause.)

6 You know, one of the phrases that caught on in this
7 city a short time ago was that "I'm reassessing my position."

8 (Laughter.)

9 I said that is just a phrase. I don't want you to
10 interpret anything into that at all. But I don't have to
11 reassess my position when it comes to talking to the leaders
12 of the great cooperatives, the great farm cooperatives of our
13 country. There has never been any reassessment as far as I
14 am concerned. I've been with you and proud to say so. I have
15 said so from one end of this Nation to another. We've stood
16 together when there were problems on tax legislation in the
17 Congress and we have stood together when there ~~have been a ten~~
18 ~~tacks~~ upon the cooperatives that have come from all sorts of
19 sources in America, and I think we will stand together in all
20 of our respective private and public lives, whatever the fu-
21 ture may offer.

22 And I can only make one expression to you today that
23 would be really meaningful and that is an expression of
24 thanks, thanks not only for what you have meant to me indivi-
25 dually in my public and private life, but, more importantly,

1 thank you for what you have meant to the Nation and what you
2 have meant to the people that you, as officers of the great
3 cooperatives, today represent. Our Nation needs help as
4 never before and it needs the help and the prayers, guidance,
5 and the strength ~~to~~ of people that care for this Nation,
6 people who are willing to put their hearts and minds and hands
7 to work for our country and not merely to condemn it and
8 criticize it, as some seem to enjoy so much, but, much more
9 significantly, to hold high the hand of this Nation to see
10 that we hold ourselves in dignity and in justifiable pride of
11 our achievements as well as our responsibilities.

12 I think that is the kind of people that I am talking
13 to today. I could just come here and sort of give you, as we
14 call, one of these after-dinner toasts, we could have a few
15 moments of levity, which is always a joy; but I thought maybe
16 I ought to talk to you seriously for a little while. I am
17 not going to talk as long this year as I did last year. My
18 goodness! I looked over the record last year and I am not
19 exactly the shortest winded speaker in Washington, I know
20 that -- I think it was last year I was with you.

21 MR. THATCHER: Two years ago.

22 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Two years ago? Was it two
23 years ago that I gave you that long speech? But I enjoyed
24 every word of it. I hope you liked it, too.

25 (Laughter, applause.)

1 I want to talk to you about the matters of legis-
2 lation that are before the Congress now and of concern to you.
3 Now, there isn't anybody that can come to you and outline a
4 perfect farm program, because if we knew how to get one we
5 would have had it a long time ago.

6 There are all sorts of conflicting interests in
7 our country and in a free society such as ours perfection is
8 seldom our accomplishment. What we try to do and what we hope
9 to do seek to do is to bring about as broad an understanding
10 as possible around as many points of common interest as
11 possible, and then to establish that as public policy or at
12 least as a public or private standard. And that is what we
13 are trying to do in the field of agriculture legislation.

14 We built on it. You can go way back to the old farm
15 board, back to the days of the McNarry-Hulgan Act, back to the
16 days of the early New Deal, back to the Agricultural Act of
17 1933, back to the days of the Agricultural Act of 1937 -- and
18 on each and every one of those proposals some of them became
19 law, some did not. We have, out of trial and error, the
20 pragmatic way of doing things, trying, seeing if it works.
21 If it doesn't work, cast it aside. If it does work, adapt it,
22 redesign it and mold it, fashion it, improve it. We have
23 been building that farm program.

24 Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is imperative that
25 after having built this house for the protection of

1 agriculture and for its encouragement that we do not let
2 somebody come in and kick it down. Sam Rayburn used to say
3 it only took one jackass to kick down a barn but it took a
4 whole lot of neighbors to build one. And you can kick down
5 a barn. You can kick down the side of the wall. You can
6 destroy a farm program. And sometimes it can be destroyed by
7 legislation; sometimes it can be destroyed by administration.
8 But, above all, it can be destroyed if we get ourselves into
9 conflict over what it ought to be so that there is no body of
10 opinion that supports anything with the majority.

11 Therefore, we need to rally the forces, to try to
12 build on what we have, to maintain that which is workable and
13 good, and by the same token to try to add onto it.

14 Now, I believe that the President's Farm Message of
15 this year, the Agricultural Message of this year represents
16 one of the most forthright, forward-looking, constructive
17 proposals that has ever been presented by any President to the
18 Congress of the United States on agricultural policy.

19 (Applause.)

20 It is a constructive program. It is not filled with
21 a lot of dramatic language. It wasn't designed to get a
22 crowd to cheer and to stomp. It was designed for economic
23 and social purposes.

24 Now, what is the first thing that it asks. Well,
25 the first thing it does is to recognize in the message the

1 important role that American agriculture plays in this
2 economy. Now, that needs to be emphasized and while you're
3 here in Washington I want you to emphasize it because you're
4 in urban America. And urban America, with urban metropolitan
5 press, without any bias on its part but just because of the
6 problems that they find in urban America, tends to forget or
7 underestimate the role of American agriculture in the social-
8 economic fabric of this country.

9 It is a fact. This is why you have to be down here
10 to the Congress and you have to be heard. You must, in a
11 very real sense, lobby for what you believe in. There is
12 nothing wrong with lobbies if you are lobbying for a noble and
13 a just cause. You have to work for what you believe in.

14 Every day I read the financial page and seldom do I
15 read very much about the role of American agriculture in this
16 economy. And, yet, this economy would collapse were it not
17 for the role of American agriculture right now. All the
18 talk about the gold, all the talk about the balance of pay-
19 ments, all of it would end in disaster if it were not for
20 American agricultural exports.

21 You hardly ever read about it. The difference be-
22 tween this country being on the verge of financial catastrophe
23 and still being a strong productive nation is the role of the
24 American farmer and the agriculture economy. That is the
25 difference.

1 (Applause.)

2 The largest single factor in our trade picture to-
3 day are our agricultural exports. That is the one thing
4 that we have more than anybody else in this world and we must
5 never lose those markets and we must never lose our capacity
6 and ability to compete. And, therefore, I come to this plat-
7 form today to say what ought to have been said a thousand
8 times, that the value of the dollar, the strength of this
9 economy, the role of the American economy in the world economy
10 is dependent in a large measure upon the health and the
11 prosperity and the productivity of American agriculture, its
12 producing agriculture, its distributive agriculture, its
13 processing agriculture, and it all gets right down again to
14 what you're doing, the farm cooperatives, that are a very
15 significant part of the free enterprise system of this country.

16 (Applause .)

17 I could even take enough time to make that long
18 speech, to go into commodity by commodity, the wheat and the
19 feed grains and the corn which is feed grain, and the soybeans,
20 the proteins, the vegetable oils, animal fats, the dairy
21 products, all of it. I study it, I have all of my life. I
22 am no Johnny-come-lately to these things. In fact, Bill
23 Thatcher has had me in his graduate school since 1945. He
24 flunked me for three years.

25 (Laughter, applause.)

1 I want you to know -- I said he flunked me for
2 three years -- I mean he had me on probation.

3 (Laughter.)

4 Finally, when he helped get me elected to the
5 United States Senate, he gave me a passing grade and since
6 then he has been saying, "Now, listen, I will expect you to
7 do better every year." I haven't missed going home and
8 talking to the Farmers Union, GTA, not once since I have
9 been a United States Senator, in 1949, not once. I have
10 traveled half way across the world. I left old Khrushchev
11 one time to come on home and talk to the Farmers Union, GTA
12 out in St. Paul. I was down in Mexico City and did the same
13 thing.

14 (Laughter.)

15 I'm glad I did. I have learned a lot. I have often
16 said I learn more economics in one South Dakota dust storm
17 than I did in seven years at the university. Boy, I'll tell
18 you, when you lose that land, when you lose those crops,
19 when those prices collapse, when those homes are foreclosed
20 on, and when the insurance companies take over the land. You
21 don't have to go to Harvard to get a course in agricultural
22 economics. I got one in Humphrey's drugstore.

23 (Laughter, applause.)

24 So we have to have a farm program. Now, one of the
25 reasons we need a farm program is that all the projections --

1 and, by the way, Roy Hendrickson served on our Food and Fiber
2 Commission, which was one of the promises of your President
3 and your Vice President, that we made to you four years ago,
4 that we would have a big broad-range study made. And we
5 looked into the production possibilities of this agricultural
6 economy of ours for years ahead. And I think this conclusion
7 is clear: There will be substantial excess capacity in
8 American agricultural, excess capacity to produce, until at
9 least 1980.

10 Now, that includes the impact of technology, new
11 fertilizers, new machinery, new seeds, and so forth, to farm
12 the land and the farm agricultural operations. But, get
13 that straight: For at least the next ten years, ten to
14 twelve years, there will be excess production capacity and,
15 therefore, we need programs of management, of supply, and
16 distribution. That is what we mean about the farm program
17 of 1965.

18 Now, that program didn't come easily. That program
19 was fought for. Listen, I was majority whip in the United
20 States Senate when we brought up the farm program. You folks
21 were down here to see me about it. We used to meet out there
22 in the reception room. We came over here at this same hotel
23 and met and talked about the Agricultural Act of 1965. That
24 was legislated in 1964.

25 I helped pass that program three times in the United

1 States Senate before we got it into law. And it was a rough
2 go. In fact, had there been a change in the House of
3 Representatives of two to three votes, you never would have
4 had it. We lost it a couple of times. And we had to have
5 every friend we could get -- and I have often said, without
6 regard to partisan politics, farm people ought to take a
7 good look at who is for you and who is against you. I will
8 take my chances on that record. Just take a look at who is
9 for you and who is against you.

10 Old Samuel Gompers, who helped build the American
11 Federation of Labor, had a very simple formula which wasn't
12 partisan: Reward your friends and punish your enemies. And
13 you can soon find out who they are, just check the roll,
14 that's all. There is one nice thing about that Congress,
15 we've got to vote "yea" or "nay." There are no "maybe" votes.
16 We either vote yes or no.

17 (Applause.)

18 So we need this farm program and we have one. And
19 what does the President's Message ask for? A permanent ex-
20 tension of the Act of 1965. And when do we want it? This
21 year. Why? Because farmers have to plan their crops for
22 next year. And we cannot await an election to get a new farm
23 program some time in next April, May, June or whenever it
24 comes for the 1969 crop. We have to pass a program now so
25 that we can plan our programming for 1969. And I hope while

1 you are here you will talk to your Congressman and your
2 Senators about it.

3 I am not going to ask you -- I am not going to run
4 the list down as to who has been for you in the past and who
5 hasn't, but they are here and you lost some good ones two
6 years ago. And you have been paying for it ever since.

7 Now, I don't know how much you think your membership
8 in a political party is worth, but if you are well to do you
9 can afford to just have anybody there represent you want. You
10 can have a fellow that is more interested in the greens on a
11 golf course than he is in a wheat field, if that is what you
12 want; or you can have somebody that is interested in your
13 economic well-being.

14 Now, what is another section of our farm program?
15 The Food for Freedom Act, which has just been extended by the
16 Senate, the Food for Peace Act. Now, the original Food for
17 Peace Act, of which I was one of the co-sponsors, it was a
18 bipartisan piece of legislation. The late Andy Sheppel of
19 Kansas was one of our friends that worked on this. I think
20 Mr. Bean would like to know, as a Kansan, that Kansas has
21 always played a good role. Frank Carlson is an old friend
22 of mine, one of the finest Senators that I have ever known,
23 and he happens to be, I guess, of another political party.
24 We never let that bother us. We never had that bother us one
25 bit.

1 (Laughter.)

2 Well, this Food for Freedom Act not only provides
3 that we will use our surpluses for constructive good in the
4 world but it authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to go
5 into the marketplace and purchase the goods that are neces-
6 sary for a balanced program, to aid the needy, to build
7 foreign trade, to fulfill the objectives of American foreign
8 policy.

9 Now, I will simplify it all by saying this, that
10 had there been no Food for Peace program, had there been no
11 Food for Freedom Act, millions and millions of children and
12 adults would have died last year. I know of the pain in the
13 hearts of the American people over the tragedy of war in
14 Southeast Asia, but I want the American people to have some
15 joy in their hearts, too. I want them to know that just as
16 soldiers are fighting in Southeast Asia for what we believe
17 is right, farmers have been producing all over American to
18 save lives by the millions, by the millions. Without American
19 food shipments into Pakistan and India these past years,
20 millions would have perished.

21 And, what is more important, those food shipments
22 were used to change a whole agricultural economy, to make it
23 more productive, to bring to bear modern agricultural tech-
24 niques upon the land and the agricultural practices of the
25 two countries that I just mentioned. Food for Freedom --

1 exactly what it is. Food for Peace -- exactly what it is.
2 That Food for Freedom today is working in Indonesia, and I
3 saw it in the month of October of this past year. I saw in
4 Indonesia corn, corn meal from the midwest, grain sorghums,
5 wheat, from the midwest, being used as a form of payment for
6 labor for the vast numbers of unemployed people in Indonesia
7 who had just broken the grip of communism on their country,
8 who had just purged themselves of a terrible dictatorship,
9 who had done it at the price of 400,000 lives, and the blood
10 ran like rivers.

11 And I saw the young people and the older people of
12 Indonesia, in Central Java, cleaning out the irrigation
13 ditches, building irrigation dams, building roads and being
14 paid for in corn meal, being paid in vegetable oil, on an
15 incentive system. And you ought to see them work. And that
16 country today is the fifth largest nation on the face of the
17 earth, is being saved by three primary reasons, for three
18 primary causes or reasons:

19 One, our stand in Southeast Asia; two, our economic
20 assistance, including our Food for Freedom program; and,
21 three, their own sacrifices, their own leadership.

22 I met with President Suharto. I talked with General
23 Nusushin. I met with Foreign Minister Molick. And, by the
24 way, the men who are guiding that country today have been
25 American educated; the investment we made in exchange students

1 paying off. Our agricultural experts are there right now,
2 teaching them modern agricultural methods. I had a team
3 come over from this country, recruited right out of the
4 American agricultural economy, to go over and help the
5 Indonesians with modern practices of agriculture, to improve
6 their rice production. And some of the men and women in this
7 room are familiar with it.

8 Food for Freedom! Food for Peace! It works. It
9 works. You just don't read very much about it, but it works.
10 For every life that has been lost, my dear friends, a hundred
11 have been saved by the food from American farms.

12 (Applause.)

13 And, I might add, that American rice today is the
14 difference between wildcat, wild inflation in Vietnam, Malaysia,
15 Thailand, and a degree of economic stability. Without
16 American rice, produced right in two or three states in this
17 country, Arkansas, Louisiana in particularly; without that
18 American rice there couldn't be any hope for freedom in
19 Southeast Asia because those who have infiltrated, those who
20 are guilty of guerrilla warfare, those who are guilty of
21 aggression, have destroyed vast areas of the agricultural
22 economy. It is our rice. It is our wheat. It is our soybean
23 oil. It is our cottonseed oil. It is our take. It is the
24 feed for their cattle. It is our hogs, if you please, and
25 our farm boys and our farm experts that are saving that part

1 of the world today, along with American military power.

2 (Applause.)

3 Now, the third part of this Farm Message is the
4 National Food Bank. Now, we have needed this, dear friends,
5 since I don't know -- we've always needed it. And we need a
6 Food Bank that is a real food bank, not something that you
7 can fool around with. Who would want to put his money in a
8 bank that somebody could tap any time? When you put your
9 money in a bank you want to be sure there are certain controls
10 on it. You want to be sure, for example, that the Comptroller
11 of the Currency can investigate it once in a while to see that
12 the money is still there. You would like to have your local
13 state authorities be able to investigate to see if your money
14 is still there. You would like to have an honorable and
15 responsible set of officers. And you have strict rules, in-
16 cluding insured bank deposits.

17 Now, we're talking about a National Food Bank in
18 which we will put a percentage of our overproduction and set
19 it aside as a strategic reserve and not to be used to depress
20 a market, not to be used to dump on a market, when your price
21 starts to go up a little bit they have somebody dump it. I
22 fought a good fight in this town about that a long time, and
23 you people know it. I said the duty of government was not
24 necessarily just to get rid of what it owns.

25 The purpose of government and the only legitimate

1 purpose of government, said Thomas Jefferson, is the health
2 and the happiness and the well-being of the people. And if
3 the Commodity Credit Corporation can fall into hands in which
4 dumping is the practice every time it looks like you're going
5 to get a fairly reasonable price for your commodity, then the
6 Commodity Credit Corporation is not your friend, it is your
7 enemy.

8 So we want to tighten up the standards by law, be-
9 cause you never know who will be running the Commodity Credit
10 Corporation. You're going to be making some fundamental de-
11 cisions this coming November, and before you make those de-
12 cisions you ought to try and be sure that you have got all the
13 things nailed down that you think somebody might run off with.

14 And one of those things that you ought to nail down
15 is what about strategic reserves. What about a National Food
16 Bank that can be used when this country is in trouble? And
17 we are going to be in trouble for a long time. John Kennedy
18 said -- and I quote him repeatedly -- in one of his memorable
19 addresses he said: "Freedom is not cheap. We, of this
20 generation, shall live out most if not all of our lives in
21 times of peril, danger and change."

22 We are going to be living in peril. There is no
23 way -- there is no easy way out. That is just the way it is.
24 It is going to be an uncertain world. No matter if you
25 could settle every international dispute that seems to be on

1 the scene now, there are others that are blossoming some
2 place else, a world in ferment.

3 Now, America must have, as a world power, a food
4 reserve, and we can't just have it in the soil. We have got
5 to have it in the bank. Imagine what it would have been
6 like here a year or so ago, two years ago when the Soviet
7 Union desperately needed food, when India needed food, when
8 Pakistan needed food, when the whole world was a great tre-
9 mendous cereal shortage, if we hadn't have been able to help?

10 Imagine what it would have been like -- and some of
11 the people in this room remember when Fiorello La Guardia,
12 under UNRA -- and, Bill, you remember -- when every bushel of
13 grain in this country literally was loaded on the box cars
14 that came up there to Climax, Minnesota. I remember, I was
15 just a young fellow around Minnesota there, trying to be
16 Mayor of Minneapolis. And we had this tremendous movement
17 of grain to feed the starving people of Western Europe who
18 today are well-fed, I might add. But what would have been the
19 world situation without American food in World War II? What
20 would it have been like if Henry Wallace hadn't had the
21 vision -- and he was always accused of being a visionary,
22 thank God he had some vision. What would it have been like if
23 we hadn't had the so-called ever normal granary, where we had
24 food in reserve?

25 But ~~the~~ farmer had to pay an awful price for this

1 because he didn't always get a good price for what he put in
2 reserve. The reserve always hung over the market like a
3 mighty anvil, ready to be dropped on his head, and it was a
4 constant weight. It is like a man trying to carry 250 bags
5 -- two 100-pound bags of feed on his shoulders and he soon gets
6 stoop-shouldered.

7 Now, we want to be able to fix it so that you can
8 stand erect, that if you are going to have to carry that extra
9 feed, that the Nation will carry it, not you, not a half
10 dozen farmers or not a group of farmers who produce a particu-
11 lar commodity, but the Nation will carry it, just exactly as
12 today we require the Nation to have a storehouse of weapons,
13 just as we require the Nation to have a storehouse of
14 strategic minerals. We don't ask the mining companies to
15 carry that.

16 The government insulates it. That is what we want in
17 the National Food Bank. Now, we came close to getting it last
18 year, not quite. And the reason we didn't get it, we lost
19 five votes. Now I am going to talk a little politics to you
20 because that is part of the business here. We lost five
21 votes in the subcommittee, on the Grain Subcommittee of the
22 House of Representatives, and five new fellows came on, and I
23 am not sure that they understood the difference between a
24 corncob and a ukulele because they voted for ukuleles.

25 (Laughter.)

1 And you didn't get your food bank, and you have
2 been paying for it ever since.

3 Now, it is a fact that we took some remedial action
4 -- resealing, where the farmer could control his own grain,
5 where it didn't fall into the hands of the government. Some
6 of us fought for that, too. Roy Hendrickson used to call on
7 me regularly. Bill Thatcher called on me regularly. Jim
8 Bean and others called on the Vice President. I am not
9 supposed to be doing much of that sort of work but I have
10 tried to represent your cause.

11 I went to the President. I went to the Secretary
12 of Agriculture. And you got what you asked for, not because
13 it was particularly a special privilege for you but because
14 it was necessary if we were going to have any kind of
15 stability, price stability in our economy.

16 Well, let's see. I just want to mention one or
17 two more of these -- this is a totally unrehearsed speech.
18 I just came on over here to visit with you. There are two
19 other things I want to mention to you.

20 Now, our commodity programs work pretty well. With-
21 out these commodity programs, it is fair to say by the most
22 conservative estimates, that farm income would be down at
23 least 30 per cent this year. Now, it may not be as good as
24 you want -- and I find around Washington more people that
25 can figure out how things could be better, they can't get

1 them passed but they figure out how they could be better, and
2 you get a great big story about it. We got people who know
3 how to remedy all the problems of cities. Of course, it
4 would take several billion dollars more, and we can't get
5 through the programs that we're already asking for. But it
6 does make you sound good.

7 But, I want to warn you: Let's try to keep what we
8 have. Let's keep what we have. And we had twenty bills
9 introduced in the House of Representatives last year to repeal
10 these farm programs. We even got some in the Senate. And we
11 even had a Democrat who introduced one. We're going to do
12 something about that kind of -- that is misdirection, you
13 know, of very vital resources and energies.

14 (Laughter.)

15 I just want you to know that the President of the
16 United States and the Vice President of the United States are
17 not for any repeal of any of these basic farm programs. We
18 have come out for a --

19 (Applause.)

20 We have come out for a program to reestablish them
21 and to continue them and to improve them. And you can be
22 sure of one thing, at least, between now and January 20th,
23 1969, there isn't going to be any harm done to the farm pro-
24 gram if the President of the United States has anything to
25 say about it, and he has plenty to say about it.

1 (Applause.)

2 Gosh, I used to be able to get up and give speeches
3 urging his reelection.

4 (Laughter.)

5 And I want to share a thought with you right at
6 that point. It has been a real privilege and a very high
7 honor for a man of very ordinary means to serve along side of
8 a President who has had to wrestle with the toughest problems
9 of this age, and I have had the chance, a boy born in South
10 Dakota, my maturity in Minnesota, working along side of farm
11 people, the son of a small town druggist, a graduate of the
12 University of Minnesota, a land-grant college, to be able to
13 serve down here as the Senator for sixteen years, majority
14 whip for four years, and now three and a half years as Vice
15 President of the United States.

16 Let me tell you, if nothing ever happens to me in
17 my life from here on out, except to attend a GTA meeting or
18 a National Federation of Grain Cooperatives, I am satisfied
19 right now.

20 (Applause.)

21 Of course, if something else does happen, that will
22 be all right, too.

23 (Laughter, applause.)

24 Now, I will just cut it off now. There are two
25 things that we need to keep in mind. One is that we have got

1 to increase this capacity of the farmer to bargain for his
2 price in that marketplace. That is one thing that has got to
3 be done. Now, we don't have all the answers. But my
4 associate, my very dear friend and the man who succeeded me
5 in the United States Senate -- and that only proves what
6 happens when you get a new man, he has done such a great job
7 -- Senator Walter Mondale has introduced legislation in the
8 Senate of the United States that provides for a means of in-
9 creasing the bargaining power of the farmer, of setting up a
10 board in which the farmer himself will have the say over his
11 own commodities, to give that farmer a chance to set his
12 price, just as other people do.

13 You know, the language of the farm economy sort of
14 intrigues me. I wanted to check a note here. I just marked
15 that down. It is so funny when you read it and yet it tells
16 you why we are in such trouble, a lot of times when you are
17 out there on that farm.

18 And, speaking of bargaining power, just look at the
19 language of the agricultural commerce. We say, for example,
20 that the hardware store charges, let's say, 40 cents a pound
21 for nails, charges. General Motors charges \$4,000 for a car.
22 But the farmer, who also produces and sells things, he gets,
23 if he is lucky, \$5.20 blend price for his milk, or he gets
24 \$26 for his fed cattle. And if you are the fellow who can
25 just "get" what they are willing to give you and the other

1 fellow charges you what he wants to charge you, you are
2 always running second in a two-man race. You can't catch up.

3 (Applause.)

4 So we have to think and find ways where the farmer
5 can have the right to charge for his products instead of
6 getting what the buyer decides that he can have. Now, you
7 don't need to worry about the farmer not having competition.
8 There is just one thing you can be sure of about farmers,
9 they are independent. They are going to have plenty of com-
10 petition and the only way that they protected themselves
11 from literally cutthroat competition is to have their co-
12 operatives where they could pool their knowledge, pool their
13 resources, pool their products, at times pool their purchas-
14 ing and marketing. That has been the saving grave for them.
15 But farm bargaining power --

16 (Applause.)

17 I don't have any blueprint on it. I know this,
18 though, that anybody that can design an Apollo capsule to put
19 a man on the moon, a country that can do that ought to be
20 able to design legislation to assure the farmer of a chance
21 to get a fair price for his commodity. It just seems that
22 that is sensible.

23 (Applause.)

24 I think we can and I think we will, if we want it.
25 But we are going to have to try. You can't listen to these

1 voices and say, well, now, it may not work. You know, the
2 first lightbulb they thought wouldn't work, but it did.
3 There are always those doubters. We've got to have people
4 that are doers and we have to start, we have to try, and I
5 hope that you will put yourself to it.

6 Now, the next thing that we need to do is to keep
7 in mind that the urban crisis in America is in part the re-
8 sult of the rural crisis that has been in America. The
9 cities have been like a blotter, absorbing the drain-off, the
10 drop-outs of rural America. Now, you are not going to keep
11 your sons and daughters down on the farm just by telling
12 them stories about fresh air and birds and the trees and the
13 green grass and how nice and wholesome it is here. That is
14 attractive, and generally it is more attractive after a
15 fellow has made a couple of hundred thousand dollars.

16 (Laughter.)

17 You know, then he can go back and enjoy all that.
18 You are going to keep Young Americans down on the farm in
19 rural America when, first of all, they can earn a fair return
20 on their investment. That is where you are going to start.

21 (Applause.)

22 And if he can earn more changing tires in a filling
23 station per hour than he can earn with \$150,000 investment in
24 a dairy farm, he's not going to farm, not if he is as bright
25 as I think most of these young people are. He is going to

1 leave.

2 So we have a responsibility, government and coopera-
3 tives and individuals together, to at least assure a man that
4 is willing to work his heart out a fair return on labor and
5 capital and investment. Now that is what we mean when we
6 talk about parity of income, parity of opportunity, that is
7 really what we're talking about. And the city man has to
8 understand that this is in his interest, the one thing that
9 has kept down the price of food in America are the vast numbers
10 of producers of food in America. And if you start to squeeze
11 them all out and you get fewer and fewer producers, you get
12 more and more control over those producers and they in turn
13 more and more control and consumers will pay and pay and pay.

14 Farm programs have been good for the consumer. Farm
15 programs have been some protection for the producer. But we
16 cannot have a prosperous America and an impoverished rural
17 America. You cannot have a peaceful America and have the
18 slums of America on fire. You cannot have an America in
19 which there is real equality of opportunity if some Americans
20 who have come from a disadvantaged rural America come to an
21 urban America like foreigners with no skills, with inadequate
22 education, with no money, and with no knowledge of urban
23 living.

24 Ladies and gentlemen, it is a fact that we have
25 Americans today whose parents, grandparents and forebears

1 have been here for 150 years, that are as foreign, as different
2 as anybody could possibly be from the rest of their fellow
3 citizens. Sometimes they are black. Sometimes they are
4 white. Poverty knows no race. The worst poverty in America
5 is not in Harlem or in Watts. The worst poverty in America
6 is in rural America. That is a statistical fact.

7 The worst schools in America are to be found in the
8 impoverished rural areas of America. The worst housing in
9 America is to be found in impoverished rural, impoverished
10 areas of rural America. Now, thank goodness all of rural
11 America is not impoverished, indeed it is not. But all I am
12 saying is that these are the swamps from whence the infection
13 comes that moves into the cities.

14 Now, the one way to meet the urban crisis is to start
15 to modernize rural America. That means good roads, airports,
16 schools, hospitals, small industries, jobs, decent farm in-
17 come, farm cooperatives, recreation, cultural institutions.
18 In other words, rural America has to have everything that the
19 best city in America has, including fresh air, including
20 green spaces. And unless we do this, ladies and gentlemen,
21 there will be no answer to the urban crisis. And, remember
22 this, for every dollar that you have to spend modernizing
23 rural America, you spend \$100 -- 100-to-1 -- to try to correct
24 the inequities in urban America.

25 In other words, you can take a dollar and put it in

1 rural America to help build a new school, a sanitary system,
2 a clean water system, some good roads and an airport, or
3 help build an industry and to have jobs, and it will cost
4 you \$100 to do exactly the same thing in the great slums of
5 the great cities of America.

6 So, when you look ahead for the next thirty years,
7 now -- and I plan on being around here with you, I just want
8 you to know that.

9 (Laughter.)

10 So some of you that are here, take good care of my
11 Medicare, I want -- I may need it and I want you to be in
12 charge, if you are going to be in charge.

13 But just think of these next thirty years -- 100
14 million more people in this country, at a minimum -- 100
15 million more. Where are they going to live? Are you going
16 to put them all in New York? In the next ten years there
17 will be one solid city from Boston, Massachusetts to Norfolk,
18 Virginia -- one solid city. They will just have signs to
19 let you know when you go from one to the other, with no open
20 spaces. And yet between the Appalachians and the Rockies
21 and the great hinterlands of America, there are vast untapped
22 areas.

23 Seventy per cent of the people today live on less
24 than one per cent of the land. You would think we just
25 loved each other so much we just couldn't get close enough.

1 (Laughter.)

2 Now, we're going to have to do something about this
3 and you can't go around ordering people. You can't go up
4 and say, well, you can't live in New York or you can't live
5 in Minneapolis or you can't live in Philadelphia. You have
6 to give people what I call free choice. But there is no free
7 choice. If one part of America is poor and another part is
8 rich, particularly if people think that is the case, there is
9 no free choice if the boy or the girl in rural America gets
10 sort of a minimal education, at best an adequate education,
11 and that same boy and girl if he moved to Philadelphia or
12 Pittsburgh or Washington, D. C. could get a good education.
13 You have got to have the good teachers, the good schools,
14 the good doctors.

15 The same thing is true of medical care. The truth
16 is that we are short of doctors in rural America. They come
17 to the big city. That is where the big hospitals are. That
18 is where the big universities are.

19 Now, your government is going to try to do a little
20 something about this. We are trying to do something about it.
21 I am Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Urban Rural America
22 Town and Country. We are trying, for example, when we build
23 a new government facility, instead of putting the same --
24 those government facilities in the same big cities, we say
25 we will take that facility and we will find another place and

1 we will go a little bit further, a hundred miles out in the
2 country, in maybe a town of 15,000. And, right away, you
3 have everybody say you can't do that because the scientist
4 or the Ph.D. or whoever you want there, they won't live in a
5 town of 15,000. Yes, they will if they salary is good. They
6 will come. And they do.

7 Huntsville, Alabama, twenty years ago was a sleepy
8 little southern town of less than 20,000 people. Today it is
9 a modern city with its own symphony orchestra of 250,000
10 people, with 200 Ph.D.'s, with thriving business enterprise,
11 with a branch of the University of Alabama. And why? Because
12 the government of the United States put a space center there.
13 They didn't put the space center in Chicago. They didn't
14 put the space center in Mobile. They didn't put it even in
15 Birmingham. They put it in Huntsville. And Huntsville,
16 that wasn't much better than Huron, South Dakota, my home
17 town, is now a city the size of St. Paul, Minnesota. And it
18 happened in a generation and it has some of the finest com-
19 munity programs that any city in America has because we made
20 it that way. And people were given a real choice.

21 Now, we have got to do this all across America. I
22 want your help on it. You see the kind of things we've got
23 to work about for the future? There is no use talking about
24 -- a lot of people like to spend a lot of time on those
25 yesterdays. They're all gone. Frankly, there isn't a one

1 we can relive. We can learn a little something from them.
2 We can cry a little over them. We can scold a few people for
3 the mistakes they made yesterday. The only day that is im-
4 portant is this one and tomorrow. And I have tried to talk
5 to you about this one, and I have tried to talk to you a
6 little bit about tomorrow, because you are the leaders, just
7 as I am supposed to be one. And leaders have a responsibility
8 to look ahead.

9 I don't think you have to learn much about history.
10 I think it is more important for you to make some history,
11 make it in your time. And that means that we have to look
12 down the road to the kind of America we want, the kind of an
13 economy we want, the role of agriculture in this economy,
14 the kind of a nation that we want in this world. Is it a
15 nation that keeps its word? Is it a nation that keeps its
16 commitments? Is it a nation that gives leadership in the
17 world? Is it a nation that cares for people? Is it a nation
18 that cares for its own human resources right here at home?

19 I think the answer is yes. If there is one word
20 that typifies America, it is the word care. We care. We
21 are concerned people. We care about people. We care about
22 the quality of life. We care about the disadvantaged. We
23 care about the injustices of the world. And we care about
24 humanity. This is why I have been so proud to be in public
25 service, because our program is one of constant nation-

1 building at home and abroad.

2 You know, there are some youngsters going around
3 the country and they have these sing-outs, they call them
4 a "sing-out for America." They are good. They are wonderful
5 young kids, clean-cut, fine, active young people, singing
6 out for America. There is not a draft-card burnder in the
7 bunch, just singing out for America.

8 Now young people can do this, I suggest to the
9 adults, that you start speaking up for America. Remember
10 what Winston Churchill said about us. He said democracy is
11 the worst possible form of government except all others that
12 have ever been tried.

13 (Laughter, applause.)

14 So I know we can pick out all the flaws and I know
15 that some people think that this proves that they are really
16 very intelligent. Well, you can be intelligent and pick out
17 some of the assets, too. And I believe that if we are going
18 to keep people believing in us and we believing in ourselves,
19 we have to demonstrate to ourselves that we have faith in
20 ourselves, and that we have reason to believe that what we
21 stand for is a just cause.

22 Lincoln was right, we are the last best hope of
23 earth, and that hope is being expressed every day, even today
24 as I talk to you, as we search for peace. And maybe you
25 know that the President's message of Sunday night has found

1 some response. Maybe you have heard that from Hanoi, in
2 North Vietnam, after several paragraphs of rather sharp
3 language criticizing us, there is information that indicates
4 that the North Vietnamese are now contemplating sending a
5 representative to talk with us. I think this is --

6 (Applause.)

7 Now, I just want it to be clear that the North
8 Vietnamese response that I mentioned here will be carefully
9 explored through all possible channels. I just left a
10 Cabinet meeting where we were talking about this. The situa-
11 tion, though, is very sensitive, very sensitive. And I don't
12 think it would serve any purpose for me to speculate any
13 further than what I have said. If there ever was a time that
14 we in public life ought to be careful about what we say, it
15 is now. And if there ever was a time that we people in public
16 and private life ought to be careful what we say about each
17 other, it is now.

18 We simply cannot afford to have this country torn
19 apart by dissention and bitterness because the strength of
20 our enemy, whoever it is, is not in them but it is in our
21 weakness. It comes from division. We can't afford -- we
22 have common objectives in this country. We ought not to be
23 fighting with each other and, above all, we ought to be very
24 careful and very responsible in what we say about each other
25 and about the world in which we live.

1 And my message to you today is one of spirit of
2 reconciliation, a spirit of understanding, a spirit of the
3 pursuit of peace, which is the highest task of statesmanship.
4 Our objective -- and I want you to know this as your -- as
5 literally a national prayer -- our objective has been, con-
6 tinues to be and remains a just and peaceful world and a just
7 and a peaceful settlement in Vietnam at the earliest possible
8 moment.

9 This is why your President said what he did Sunday
10 night. I knew what he was going to say. It was a hard blow
11 for some of us and it was difficult for him to say it. But
12 he made up his mind that he had to concentrate his attention,
13 every minute of it, upon the pursuit of peace and, if need be,
14 he would sacrifice his political life and his political
15 future for the office of the Presidency, that high office
16 that symbolizes this Nation, and hopefully in doing what he
17 did to help bind up the Nation's wounds, to appeal to
18 people's reason, there isn't a dispute at home or abroad
19 that can't be settled through negotiation and peaceful
20 processes.

21 We can't afford to have America's future at home
22 decided on the streets in violence and we can't afford to
23 have the world's future decided on the battlefields with
24 aggressors who use brute force. And that is why your govern-
25 ment must take its stand against violence and those who engage

1 in violence. That is why we must stand for law and order,
2 even as we pursue social change. And that is why, my
3 friends, that we must stand against those who use brute
4 force to gain their political objectives, even as we encourage
5 those that we defend to build a new society, to correct the
6 inequities of their society, to remove the abuses of their
7 society. This is what we are doing. It is the most diffi-
8 cult assignment in life.

9 Believe me, I know. I have only been a little part
10 of it, because I am only the Vice President. But, let me
11 tell you, I have watched our President wrestle with these
12 problems. And my appeal to America is: Let there be
13 justice and tranquility in this country. You can have pro-
14 gress with order. There isn't any real progress without
15 order. And we can find a way to settle international dis-
16 putes if the enemy will but come to a conference table. And,
17 maybe, at long last, that star, that light of hope is there.

18 I hope and pray that it is. I hope that what I
19 heard today is the beginning of that lonely walk to the
20 cathedral of peace. And, if it is, this is a bright day for
21 America and for the whole world.

22 Thank you very much.

23 (Applause.)

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