

August 20, 1940

[Commentary for Motion Picture - National Farm Program]

FBI-2 Speech File

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*News reel
Don H. Pritchard
Aug 28 - 1940*

The motion pictures you have just seen tell in graphic form something of what farmers have been doing, over the whole United States, to make farm life more secure, more comfortable, and more satisfying.

We all know that for many years farmers have practiced cooperation. Perhaps more than any other group of our American people, they have known what it is to be good neighbors. In the earliest pioneer days, farm folks used to help each other in husking bees, quilting bees, home building, and barn raising.

That spirit has not been lost. Even in this day of modern machinery, farmers often "change work" with each other. Farm families share their toil and their play, their joys and their sorrows, their aspirations and their achievements with their neighbors.

In recent years farmers have carried this spirit of neighborliness into broader fields. Through the National Farm Program the farmers have joined hands to improve their incomes, conserve their soil, gain greater security, safeguard the nation's food supplies, adapt credit facilities to their needs, bring electricity to their homes, and protect their markets against the effects of war.

Things on the farm still are not as good as they should be, and will be. The farmers already have accomplished much. As we think

back to the somber days of 1932--the days of closed banks, wholesale farm foreclosures, and corn so cheap that it was used for fuel--as we think back to those days, we realize what a change there has been.

Only through their own efforts in cooperating with each other could farmers have brought about such a widespread improvement. But, with the whole world in turmoil, even the united efforts of the farmers would not have been sufficient without the cooperation of the government. Since 1933, the rural part of the United States has ceased to be the forgotten part of the United States.

Since 1933, your government, as represented by Congress, by the Department of Agriculture, and, I am proud to say, by the White House, has recognized the farmers' problems and has been determined that rural America shall not be forgotten--that it shall have equality with the rest of the nation. Since 1933, your government has been a friend of the farmer--not in promises made only to be broken--but in real, concrete action that gets results.

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Your problem now--this fall--is to make sure that this National Farm Program will go on. This is a very real problem because the ^{minority} ~~Republican~~ opposition in Congress has consistently voted ~~by~~ ^{by} majorities ~~of~~ three or four to one against your program. In the light of that record, you can not rely on any grudging acceptance of the program made now. Unless the farm program is in the hands of an administration sincerely and whole-heartedly in sympathy with agriculture, it is almost certain to be gradually weakened and destroyed.

Handwritten notes:
The farmers' program
is the only one
that will
save the
farmers
from
ruin
1933

The choice farmers will make this fall is especially vital in view of the serious world situation and its effect on farmers' export markets. The welfare of fifty million people living on farms and in towns that serve the farms is at stake. Their welfare depends on meeting that situation courageously, wisely, sympathetically, and effectively.

I am confident that the people of America recognize the gravity of our future and are determined to take whatever steps are needed to safeguard the millions of American homes.