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AGRICULTURE IN THE NATION'S POLITICS

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SUMMARY

Although agriculture is weakening as a force in domestic politics, the potential of agricultural policy is growing in the area of our foreign policy. Taken together, high costs of controlling farm surpluses, concentration among the few of benefits from governmental price supports, potential surpluses that overhang the market, and the dilemmas of price policy and acreage diversion all constrain farm politicians to seek control of foreign markets and foreign policy in order to obtain relief from agriculture's domestic woes. Counterforce may soon compel a search for ways to put our agricultural science to effective use in nations that so desperately need it.

Among the most critical issues of foreign policy is the American effort to help developing countries grow economically, improve human conditions, and increase chances for constitutional democracies. Here agricultural policy and politics can do much, if we work for major changes in the agricultural aspects of our foreign policy.

We should move more vigorously and systematically than ever to project our agricultural sciences into the developing countries and to follow these with related disciplines from our universities. In this effort, we should begin with agriculture because of the obvious need of developing countries for more food, food, food for people, people, people.

We have long sent our career diplomats abroad. We also extend abroad our military establishments through career officers on advisory missions. It is time that we match our diplomats and our military efforts with an international career service representing the peaceful arts. Thus, if the waning of traditional farm power speeds and nourishes the growth of a new public-private enterprise abroad, rooted in the great institutions of this country, it will enlarge the scope and purpose of these institutions. Along with diplomats and military officers we will then have educators abroad in force as a career service with their links intact to their own faculties, schools, and universities to which they will periodically return. This will enable us to employ the powerful political base which already exists in the

university establishment in this country to project abroad the arts of peace.

Let me develop the argument.

THE DECLINE OF AGRICULTURE IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

In 1962 the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that the manner of reapportionment of the Tennessee General Assembly denied rights guaranteed by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In striking down Georgia's apportionment of Congressional seats early in 1964, the court announced the standard of "one man, one vote"; and in June of 1964, the court laid down that "the seats of both houses of a bicameral state legislature must be apportioned on a population basis."¹ In August 1965, Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen could not persuade two-thirds of the Senate to approve an amendment which would permit states to choose through referenda to apportion one house of their legislatures on the basis of a standard other than "one man, one vote."

It is virtually certain that efforts to reverse the judicial revolution in apportionment have failed. Thus the old interests are going and new interests are vesting in their places.

How much will reapportionment reduce the political power of rural areas? Congressman Jamie Whitten (D., Mississippi) declared that the Georgia case would result in the transfer of 27 House of Representatives seats from rural to city areas. "This will, of course, have the effect of reducing those with rural or agricultural districts by what amounts to 54 votes." Using the 1960 census the *Congressional Quarterly* calculated that apportionment of Congressional seats in each state would cause a net loss of 12 seats in "rural areas," which includes small towns and cities up to 50,000. The loss is therefore considerable.

Reapportionment of state legislatures will result in much more significant shifts in their power bases than Congressional redistricting. The David-Eisenburg calculation found that in 1960 the relative "value of the vote" for representatives in state legislatures compared with 100 as average, was 168 for counties under 25,000 in population and 77 in counties of 500,000 or more. The most rural counties enjoyed more than twice the legislative representation of the most urban counties.

The rural farm population continues to decline. Between 1954

¹Charles M. Hardin, "Issues in Legislative Reapportionment," *Review of Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (April 1965), pp. 147-72.

and 1964 the number of farms fell from nearly 4.8 million to less than 3.5 million. The USDA predicts a further drop in farm numbers to 2.6 million by 1970, and this decline will probably be quickly translated into a loss in political influence by reapportionments after 1970. Until the revolution in reapportionment, the net outmigration from the farms normally did not result in a corresponding change in legislative reapportionment. Indeed, those remaining on farms usually gained because fewer persons typically elected the same number of state legislators. This "unearned increment" of politics will presumably disappear.

Shifts in population have already diminished the rural farm political strength in Congress; however, the loss is not as great as we sometimes are led to believe. Much strength has rested on the entrenchment of farm-based Congressmen in formal positions of power in the House of Representatives. The historical loyalty of Southern voters has done much to insure long tenures of Southern Congressmen who, following the seniority principle which is the "iron law of oligarchy" of Congress, have moved inexorably into the seats of power.

In a tribute to Congressman Whitten, Chairman of the Agricultural Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations, Congressman Natcher said: "This (Agricultural Appropriations) bill has become a rather difficult bill to present to the . . . House. . . . We have an able chairman on this committee, and if that were not the situation, we would be in difficulty every year that we present this bill." Mr. Whitten noted that perhaps the greatest service he had ever done for agriculture was getting Mr. Cannon to put him on the Public Works Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations—"so the other members realized they couldn't kick agriculture around without having to face me on the other committee."

Mr. Whitten's influence extends beyond public works to defense appropriations. In a controversy with Congressman Leggett (D., California) over price supports for cotton, Congressman Whitten noted that Congressman Leggett was a member of the Armed Services Committee and added ". . . you [in California] get about half the Federal contracts in defense." "It seems to be a diminishing amount all the time," said Congressman Leggett, "We are fighting that." Mr. Whitten replied: "I deal with that on the armed services appropriations." "I know," said Congressman Leggett.

The organization of power revealed in part in these comments has been formidable. It is reasonable to attribute to it a large part of the considerable success that agriculture has enjoyed in securing

federal appropriations. Nevertheless, the power of agriculture in the formal structure of the House seems to be declining. In 1958 the Speaker of the House of Representatives and twelve of the most powerful House committee chairmen hailed from districts which were 35 percent rural farm when the nation was only 15.3 percent rural farm. In 1964 Congressmen holding the same positions were from districts which were only 17 percent rural farm, while national rural farm population was 8.7 percent.²

The loss of agricultural influence in the nation's politics may also explain the recent transfers of five Democrats from the Committee on Agriculture "to more prestigious committees."

Finally, the signs of instability in the traditional loyalty to the Democratic party on the part of Southern rural voters could greatly accelerate the decline of agriculture's political position in Congress.

The growing strength of the Presidency hardly needs arguing. Presidential dependence upon metropolitan majorities, heavy at present, will grow. In making his case for a Department of Urban Affairs in the Cabinet, President Johnson said that 80 percent of Americans will live in cities by the year 2000.

The last item in this catalogue of apparent losses or weaknesses in agriculture's political position is the continuing conflict over policy between the American Farm Bureau Federation on the one hand, and on the other, the USDA, the National Farmers Union, and increasingly, the Grange. Divisions within agriculture are not new. Despite the "agricultural bloc" of the 1920's and its considerable success, effective passage of farm legislation awaited not only the coming of the New Deal but also the "union of cotton and corn" in the Farm Bureau. It might be plausibly argued that the accent upon commodity programs since, say, 1938 has stimulated a proliferation of commodity groups both as independent organizations and also within the general farm organizations, especially the Farm Bureau.

Charles L. Clapp has published a book, *The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It*, based upon discussions with and among Congressmen. He quotes Congressional opinion:

²Charles M. Hardin, "Farm Political Power and the U. S. Governmental Crisis," *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 40, No. 5 (December 1958), pp. 1646 ff. Compare the map showing location of the formal leadership of the House and Senate in Special Report, "Congressional Reform," *Congressional Quarterly*, June 7, 1963, p. 881.

The farm bloc is split into wheat blocs and cotton blocs that don't work together. The peanut bloc is split up into the runner, the south-west Spanish, and the Virginias. The wheat bloc is splitting up by classes of wheat. The cotton people are split between the old cotton growing part of the South, the Texas group, and the California group, and the three can never get together any more. The Texas group is even split—one area is in the new part, and central Texas is all for the Old South.³

Richard E. Fenno, Jr., writes:

The conditions of committee influence vary. Members [of Congress] are likely to defer to a committee, for example, when the issues are technical and complicated, when large numbers do not feel personally involved, or when all committee members unite in support of the committee's proposals. . . . Conversely, members are less likely to defer to the judgment of a committee when the issue is of a broad and ideological sort, where national controversy has been stirred, or where the committee is not unanimous. These latter conditions frequently mark the work of the Committee on Education and Labor and on Agriculture.⁴

These appear, then, to be the factors in the loss of farm political power: migration from farms, reapportionment, fewer strategic positions in the formal power organization of Congress, the lessened loyalties of Southern rural voters for Democratic Congressmen, the continued enhancement of the executive power over the Congressional, and the growth of struggles within the agricultural interest, in and out of Congress. What factors may be listed on the other side?

In 1965 passage of the omnibus farm bill through the House may have been attributable to an arrangement in which rural Democratic Congressmen supported repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, the provision permitting states to outlaw union shops, in return for urban Democratic votes for the farm bill. Do we have here the beginnings of an alliance powerful enough to counteract the factors making for farm political losses and to shore up waning farm political influence? I am doubtful. In 1965 the rural Congressmen could help urban Congressmen obtain a cherished end of organized labor, repeal of 14(b); even so, urban Congressional acquiescence was reportedly very reluctant. Henceforth, at the very least, urban interests would have to want legislative favors as substantial as those the rural Congressmen (assuming that they are united) will want. Moreover, rural Congressmen will have fewer votes with which

³The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1963, p. 328.

⁴"The Internal Distribution of Influence: The House," in *The Congress and America's Future*, David B. Truman, ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1965, p. 54.

to bargain. Finally, the history of farm-labor logrolling suggests how difficult it is to attain anything more than an *ad hoc* agreement on specific issues.⁵

Again, how much offset for the probable loss in farm political influence may derive from support of business and other groups? Take the Agricultural Conservation Program for example. Successive Presidents have repeatedly tried to cut back ACP expenditures only to be overridden by Congress. Approximately one million farms cooperate annually in the program which is administered by the powerful Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service which has a strong vested interest in its continuance. It has had a potent ally in the Soil Conservation Service and its associated supporters. Turning to business support, the ACP also has effective help from the National Limestone Institute which regularly testifies in favor of ACP appropriations. In 1962, over 21 percent of ACP payments went for agricultural limestone.

How vital the National Limestone Association's support has been to the continuation of the ACP can only be guessed, but all the conditions of a classic example of effective influence are present. The program spends some 200 million dollars a year, which makes the prize worth fighting for, yet even this amount is treated rather casually by Congress when it deals with the 6-7 billion dollar USDA budget. Moreover, the association can confine its energies to only one issue on which decisions are essentially made in the Congressional appropriations subcommittees. Finally, the 584 members of the National Limestone Association are admirably distributed to provide local encouragement to Congressmen who honor the committee decisions to continue the ACP.

Another example is business combinations associated with reclamation development. Contractors, railroads, engineering firms, cement companies—these and others are intensely interested in reclamation projects, and so are main street interests which happily anticipate the influx of population, the growth of business, and the rise of land values which will follow a shift from grazing to irrigation. The acceptance of reclamation projects or other similar assistance for separate localities requires deals to provide enough votes. The result is

⁵Farm and labor groups rolled logs in the late 1930's, farm Congressmen supporting the Wages and Hours Act of 1938 in return for urban Congressional votes for the parity payment features of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. Subsequently, rural and urban votes were traded in conjoint support of appropriations for parity payments and for work relief. But both farm and labor leaders were anxious to get legislation which provided economic assurances or floors to their groups without their having each year to go through the undignified and risky business of fighting for annual appropriations.

classic logrolling of which the Rivers and Harbors Bill is the prototype. Logs can be rolled, of course, with groups and interests quite outside agricultural or developmental programs. The USDA is rapidly developing a "growth industry" of this type in the watershed program of the SCS.

However, the major question is: Will enough interested industries—banks; feed, seed, and fertilizer dealers; farm implement companies; etc.—rally to the major price-support and surplus-disposal programs to maintain them and their considerable budgetary outlays in the face of the declines in farm political power and influence? This is a much more difficult question.

Walter B. Garver, Manager, Agricultural Department, Chamber of Commerce of the United States, responded as follows in June 1965 to a letter which I had sent him:

I think your impression is reasonably correct that there is some increase in the backing for policies to help farmers from the farm-related businesses. In my experience, this is essentially tied to the fear in rural areas of community economic decline which in some areas is seen as tied to the declining number of farms and farmers. . . . However, it is my reading of this situation that it is a resistance to sharp and catastrophic change rather than positive support for "present policies" that gives it substance.

Norman F. Reber, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Agricultural Editors' Association, wrote me in June 1965:

I would say that there will be considerable influence, from what we know as allied industry, to help the farmer maintain his status and political power. However, I do not believe that in the long run this sort of influence will compensate for the decline of the more traditional kind of farm political power.

Douglas Hewitt, Executive Secretary of the Farm and Industrial Equipment Institute, sent me the following analysis in June 1965:

The changes taking place on the farm have certainly frightened many small town, small businessmen into supporting any kind of a government program which will keep a little extra money flowing into their communities—*this year, now*—in the face of the exodus of so many of their more talented young people. It would be inevitable that a certain percentage of farm equipment dealers should share this sentiment. That larger, more sophisticated companies would for this reason change their orientation either pro or con this view seems most unlikely; at least I see no real evidence indicating such.

The converse of the local exuberance over the prospect of reclamation projects is the community despair over the disintegrating economies as barbershops, banks, and businesses take their turns at

being "tractored" or "consolidated" or "soil banked" out of existence. Nevertheless, a closer examination shows that enlargement, consolidation, and even the retirement of farms, while they push people out of the country and toward the cities and cause economic pain to many in the locality, also profit others. A study in the environs of Lisbon, North Dakota, of 59 farms with all available acreage in the soil bank was made in 1960-61 by the staff of the agricultural economics department of North Dakota State University under the leadership of Professor Fred R. Taylor. Findings were that local business lost both on sales of inputs to farmers and on margins realized as handlers or processors of products bought from farmers. Farm implement companies not only lost sales to farmers but suffered from the fact that "soil bankers" sold off machinery to their neighbors. The county's taxes declined. Farmers paid off loans to banks and others and ceased being customers for credit. But:

The net income to the operators of these 59 . . . farms was essentially the same after the soil bank as before. Most were pleased and satisfied with the soil bank. . . .

Most of the soil bank income is being spent on consumer durables and non-durables at the expense of farm production supplies, equipment and machinery.⁶

My tentative conclusion is that, while farm-related businesses may help them, the major price-support programs will still have to rely essentially on the same sources of strength that have sustained them in the past. Farm-related business seems too diffuse in its interest and too divided to compensate for losses in the size and solidity of the farm bloc, in and out of Congress. Continued replenishment of the capital of the Commodity Credit Corporation will surely become more difficult for farm politicians who have lost both in numbers and in their strategic positions and who are trying to lead a following that seems to be ever more internally divided and contentious.

And yet certain strengths remain. The very existence of the Commodity Credit Corporation with its authorization to borrow up to 14.5 billion dollars is one of these. There is also the ASCS Committee system—171 state committeemen who worked 113 days in 1964, 9,183 county committeemen who worked 54 days, 80,000 community committeemen who put in 36 days apiece, and more than 15,000 full-time office employees—these provide an impressive vested interest.

Finally, many people must be rather painfully conscious of the

⁶Hearings, Committee on Agriculture, H. of R., "Wheat and Feed Grains," 98th Cong., 1st Sess., 1965, Serial J, pp. 620-22; see also pp. 67-78, 192, 287, 300, 352.

vulnerability of commercial farming communities to economic collapse should price-support programs be suddenly withdrawn.

HIGH PROGRAM COSTS AND FEW BENEFICIARIES

Iowa State University economists have recently estimated the average annual net costs of current farm programs for 1949-1963 at \$2,188,400,000. Programs include only those aimed at supporting prices, controlling production, and disposing of surpluses.⁷ Administrative costs which are not included were \$224,000,000 in fiscal 1964 for the ASCS.

I get a higher figure for recent years by analyzing the expenditures for the USDA as part of the federal budget (Table 1).

TABLE 1. USDA EXPENDITURES, FISCAL YEARS 1956-1963¹

	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
	<i>Hundred Million Dollars</i>							
Total USDA expenditures	5.2	5.0	4.9	7.1	5.4	5.9	6.7	7.7
ASCS	.2	.7	1.0	.9	.6	.7	.7	.7
Price-support programs, CCC	2.9	1.1	.9	2.8	1.5	1.3	2.0	3.1
P. L. 480, International Wheat Agreement, barter for stockpile	.8	1.8	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.0	2.0
Section 32, 30 percent of tariff receipts	.2	.2	.1	.1	.1	.2	.2	.1
Subtotal, price supports	3.1	3.8	3.4	5.3	3.8	3.1	4.9	5.9
Percent price supports of total	60	76	69	74	70	52	77	76

¹House of Representatives, Agricultural Appropriation Hearings, Fiscal 1965, Part 1, pp. 254 ff.

The official USDA interpretation differs from mine. Of USDA expenditures for fiscal 1964 totalling 7,897 million dollars, the USDA allocates 3,062 million dollars or 38 percent to programs "predominantly for the stabilization of farm incomes." To these I should add P. L. 480 expenditures under Title 1, half of P. L. 480 costs for foreign emergency famine relief (on the ground that these operations also contribute to the support of farm prices), and the cost of long-term supply contracts. I should also add the cost of the International Wheat Program, the barter-for-stockpile program, and the ACP. My total would be 5,059 million dollars or 63 percent of total expenditures.

⁷Leo V. Mayer, Earl O. Heady, and Dean H. Holst, *Costs of Marginal Land Retirement Programs*, CAED Rpt. No. 23, Iowa State University, May 1965.

But we need not go into these arguments further. Even taking the lower figures, the costs of farm price-support programs are almost universally conceded to be high. Then, too, the concentration of the farm price-support benefits among relatively few commercial farmers, which has been noted for 25 years, is becoming notorious.

Table 2 shows the distribution of U. S. farms by value of sales and by income in 1964. Just under one million farms had sales of \$10,000 and over. As recently as 1955 only 583,000 farms were in this category. Despite the protests of certain farm spokesmen, the emergence of a commercial farm population of perhaps 800,000 who produce nearly the entire commercial agricultural output seems certain and promises to be rapid. Indeed, as can be calculated from Table 2, 87 percent of the "farms" with sales of less than \$2,500 are either part-time farms or part-retirement farms.

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF U. S. FARMS BY VALUE OF SALES AND INCOME, 1963

Class Number	Farms With Sales	Number of Farms	Distribution of Farms	Income per Farm Operator Family		
				Realized Net Income	Off-Farm Income	Total ¹
		<i>Thousands</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>
1	\$20,000 and over	384	10.7	10,180	2,177	12,357
2	\$10,000 to \$19,999	594	16.6	6,207	1,512	7,719
3	\$5,000 to \$9,999	609	17.0	3,731	1,778	5,509
4	\$2,500 to \$4,999	463	13.0	2,337	2,080	4,417
5	Less than \$2,500	1,523	42.7	1,029	3,222	4,251
(5a)	Part-time	903	25.3	919	4,450	5,369
(5b)	Part retirement	418	11.7	1,086	1,880	2,966
(5c)	Other	202	5.7	1,406	510	1,916
6	All farms	3,573	100.0	3,504	2,431	5,935

¹Includes nonmoney income from food and housing.

SOURCE: Economic Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Farm Income Situation*, November 1964.

In view of these figures, the estimated distribution of governmental payments to farmers in 1963 confirms our expectations. About 11 percent of all farms had annual sales of \$20,000 and over, received governmental payments averaging \$2,391 per farm, and accounted for 54.5 percent of the total. On the other hand, 42.5 percent of the farms with less than \$2,500 sales averaged only \$51 in government payments per farm and accounted for only 4.6 percent of the total payments (Table 3).

TABLE 3. GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS TO AGRICULTURE
(ESTIMATES, 1963)

Farms With Sales	Distribution of Farms	Government Payments		
		Total	Per Farm	Distribution
	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Million Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Percent</i>
\$20,000 and over	10.7	918	2,391	54.5
\$10,000 to \$19,999	16.6	393	670	23.6
\$5,000 to \$9,999	17.0	213	350	12.6
\$2,500 to \$4,999	13.0	80	173	4.7
Less than \$2,500	42.7	77	51	4.6
Total	100.0	1,686	472	100.0

The concentration of benefits can also be shown from the USDA's calculations on income parity for farmers. This method discloses a tremendous gap between "parity income" and what most farmers actually receive (Table 4).

TABLE 4. INCREASE IN INCOMES REQUIRED FOR FARMS TO ACHIEVE PARITY

Farm Group	Increase in Gross Income Required for Parity
	<i>Percent</i>
400,000 farms selling \$20,000 or more of products	2
600,000 farms selling between \$10,000 and \$20,000	10
600,000 farms selling between \$5,000 and \$10,000	34
450,000 farms selling between \$2,500 and \$5,000	75

At first, these figures seem to confirm that the price-support program is, indeed, a program in the interest of a *class*. In 1933 we talked of the disparity in incomes of *agriculture* as a *sector* compared to the rest of the economy; and occasionally we continue in the same vein. Today, however, the welfare of the commercial farmer appears to be the essential aim of the price-support program. The USDA emphasizes the debt the consumer owes to agriculture and especially the interest of the consumer in the commercial farmer.

Actually, the class orientation of agricultural policy is nothing new. All who remember the travail of the Farm Security Administration have seen the evidence that many of the power holders in agriculture have long been either fearful of systematic efforts to reach

a helping hand to the rural farm poor or else have simply been indifferent to their existence.

Given the strong strategic positions in Congress which certain agricultural interests have traditionally enjoyed, the programs may be politically sustained to an important extent by the small benefits that they regularly distribute to large numbers of farmers. The situation in cotton illustrates both of these qualifications. At the request of Congressman Weitner (D., Georgia), the USDA supplied data on distribution of benefits in the cotton program for 1961. Allotments were held by 928,761 farmers of whom 70 percent had allotments of 10 acres or less and received an average subsidy benefit of \$63. On the other hand, 322 farms with allotments of 1,000 acres or more received an average subsidy benefit of \$113,657. The windfalls of the wealthy may well be politically sustained by the pittances to the poor.

When the increasing concentration of benefits among the "elite" group become more widely known and remembered, an agricultural price policy heavily based upon subventions may become very difficult to maintain.

Now there are two arguments against this spotlighting of the elite and of the extraordinary benefits that it derives from farm programs. The first has already been suggested but should be made explicit. Walter Wilcox wrote me in August 1965: "When the per capita cost of the farm program is added to consumers' per capita expenditures for food they spend a *substantially smaller* proportion of their income for these items than consumers in other countries spend for food alone."

The argument that Americans could afford to pay somewhat more for their food may still be well taken; however, the contention that the cost of price supports should therefore simply be added to consumer costs misses the point that the derivation and allocation of governmental expenditures create special problems which have an economic aspect but are essentially political. On the side of creating public funds or income streams one has to consider many economic effects, e.g., the impact on the economy of additional taxes, especially the impact on wealth, on expenditures, or on income streams of various groups; hence a political effect. On the expenditure side, one has the competing demands of the several claimants to the more negotiable part of his budget. Thus, the argument that farm program costs and the concentration of public benefits among the few should be overlooked because Americans pay a very small fraction of their budget for food is not very convincing.

The other argument—that an immediate or even a rapid removal of governmental price programs would be disastrous for commercial agriculture—is more telling, especially when the argument is reinforced by analyses of the potential productivity which is inherent in the nature of the present state of the arts. According to Walter Wilcox, realized net farm income, in the absence of price supports and acreage diversion programs, would drop 52 percent. Donald R. Kaldor believes that “total net farm income would drop sharply during a transition period to free markets.” He considers that the drop toward the end of the period might be about 25 percent, assuming some acceleration in the decline of farm numbers. Whereas Dr. Wilcox expects during the transition period “farm mechanization, farm consolidation, and off-farm migration probably would be slowed down,” Professor Kaldor looks for “some increase in the rate of decline of farm numbers” and a “likely acceleration in the decline in farm population.”

On top of the threatened decline in farm incomes if price-support programs are rapidly withdrawn is the threat from galloping technology. Dr. Wilcox avers that in the last five years “the increased use of fertilizers and associated practices have added the equivalent of 25,000,000 crop acres to our productive capacity.”

FARM POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY

Congress faces cruel dilemmas in domestic farm policy, and the temptation is strong to seek relief in foreign markets and at the expense of foreign competition. The first dilemma seems to be the choice between continuing present price-support programs with the consequent enrichment of an elite or abandoning them with the risk of impoverishment to commercial agriculture and the virtual certainty of a deflation in land values. The second dilemma is the contradiction between the results that may be obtained from acreage diversion programs when the equivalent of five million acres of cropland is being added annually to the agricultural base through additional use of fertilizers and related practices. The more cropland diversion succeeds in raising farm prices, the greater the incentive to increase inputs on the land remaining in production.

So the politicians have returned to the export market to help get rid of farm surpluses. The Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, Public Law 480, marked an effort by the United States to expand exports. This law has expanded to include “foreign policy, humanitarian assistance, and economic development” as well as to provide “an outlet for current and future U. S. agricultural products.” Through fiscal year 1962 over 9 billion dollars in agricul-

tural products were shipped under P. L. 480 programs—or nearly 30 percent of all agricultural exports. Approximately twice that much in value was programmed.

Since 1961 a combination of vigorous foreign disposal of feed grains, higher feed consumption by more livestock, and (in 1964) unfavorable weather, helped reduce feed grain carryovers. But continued expansion of cotton carryovers may explain the heightened Congressional interest in pushing sales abroad and in preventing the rise in foreign competition for American farm products. Thus, the Report of the House Committee on Appropriations on the Agricultural Appropriation Bill for fiscal 1965 states: "In the opinion of the Committee, it is far better to use taxpayers' money to improve American Agriculture and protect the American Consumer than to provide training and technical assistance to our competitors in world agricultural markets through the Agency for International Development." No USDA funds, said the report, "should be used to promote or assist in promoting overseas production of any agricultural commodity" which is "affected by any price support program in the United States." Since all U. S. farm products presumably are affected by price supports, the proscription is universal.

In 1965 the Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee returned to the same theme in discussions in the hearings as well as in the report to the House of the Committee on Appropriations. The report declared that the United States, like "most exporting nations," should sell what it produces and does not need "for what it will bring in the world markets." The Committee "insists" among other things that the United States announce each year the quantity of cotton it will sell, presumably for whatever cotton will bring, on the world markets. When such sales quotas are connected with price-support programs that stimulate production with the residue being sold abroad for whatever it will bring, the effect is dumping.

For much of our agricultural history the fiat of such directives from the Appropriations Committee would, indeed, have been law. But the situation may have changed perhaps because of factors already noted indicating the weakening of the traditional vested position of agriculture in the nation's politics and perhaps also because of the strength of the administration with its two-thirds Congressional majority and a President unparalleled in his stamina, in his skill, and in his exhaustive knowledge of U. S. politics.

What we are witnessing may be a repetition of executive surges into superior positions in farm policy such as occurred in 1933, in 1949, and in 1954, only to be followed by the reassertion of Congress-

sional dominance—although the Congressional base upon which a return to superiority would have to be built has now been greatly weakened.

The moves of the administration in 1965 seem compatible with a re-examination of the agricultural aspects of U. S. foreign policy such as the National Agricultural Advisory Commission called for in 1964. The NAAC praised the concept of P. L. 480 and noted the great need of many countries for food. With respect to provision of U. S. farm produce to developing countries, however, the NAAC said:

The controlling consideration should be the long-run contribution food can make to the economic development, political stability, and general welfare of the recipient countries. Extremely difficult judgments must be made as to when food will serve such purposes without undermining the expansion of underdeveloped countries' own agriculture or making large numbers of people dependent on gift-like supplies of food that cannot be sustained.

Whatever detailed conclusions will come out of re-examining "agricultural" foreign policy, one general finding seems clear in advance. The developing countries must essentially rely upon themselves. The 1959 *Report on India's Food Crisis and the Steps to Meet It* estimated the additional food India would require to feed its growing population and declared: "No conceivable programme of imports or rationing could meet a crisis of this magnitude."⁸ During 1954-1961, U. S. concessional sales to India "have represented a gross average per capita intake daily of 77 calories, which compares with an estimated daily per capita intake of 2,050 calories in 1958 and 1959."⁹ That is, the U. S. provided 3.7 percent of India's calories. The meaning is unmistakable: India—and it is only the best example of the universal situation—must feed its own.

We can help with exports of food and other capital. But we can help chiefly through sharing with India and other developing countries the tremendous resources available in our agricultural scientific establishment. Our own experience defines the need. The miracle of American agricultural production and efficiency is a product of many factors in synergistic combination, but one of its main sources is agricultural science.

Let me emphasize the extent of the need for trained agricultural researchers and teachers. Colombia, a nation of 15-16 million, has three colleges of agriculture which graduate each year 80-90 in-

⁸Government of India, New Delhi, April 1959, p. 13.

⁹George Allen, *Economics, Politics, and Agricultural Surpluses*, The Agricultural Economics Society, 1962, p. 15.

genioros agronomos, roughly the equivalent of our bachelors of science. With about half her population in agriculture Colombia has a rural farm sector roughly comparable in numbers to that of the U. S. with 195 million. In 1963-64 the U. S. graduated 7,050 with B.S. degrees in agriculture and closely related disciplines, 1,859 with M.A. degrees, and 569 with Ph.D. degrees.

No doubt developing countries need help chiefly in planting and nourishing science through their own institutions. But as is shown by the Colombian experience (and, indeed, our own, if one goes back far enough), these will take some time to grow. Meanwhile U. S. colleges of agriculture offer great resources for providing part of the training of developing country students and, indirectly, for assisting developing country institutions. The demand on U. S. colleges is already great. In major colleges of agriculture one-third to one-half of the graduate students may come from abroad, mostly from developing countries.

Fortunately, a statesmanlike move is in the making to provide the financial sinews for international service. Senator George McGovern and thirteen other senators introduced S. 1212 in February 1965, to provide a permanent authorization modeled on the Hatch Act of 1887 for federal aid to universities which would establish programs for international assistance through research, training, and development.

CONCLUSIONS—AND A LARGER SIGNIFICANCE

Let us return to the beginning. We see a decline in traditional farm political power in the United States, also the growing travail of farm policy with heavy governmental costs, benefits increasingly concentrated among the few, the enrichment-impoverishment dilemma, and the acreage diversion-technological upsurge dilemma. Agricultural political forces in Congress are increasingly turning to foreign markets and the manipulation of foreign trade to cure the ills of domestic agriculture.

Currently, rising economic and political difficulties of the developing world suggest a re-examination of U. S. policy toward poorer countries. There, a prime objective must be to increase rates of growth, especially in agricultural sectors. Since agricultural productivity stems largely from applied science, we look to our colleges of agriculture for expanded service in the cause of overseas development. To this end, a conscious broadening of purpose in the minds of educational leaders plus adjustments in their institutions may well have memorable effects.

But there is a larger significance! One way or another, the United States will wrestle with the problems of the world. In so doing our missions abroad must reflect our expertise; but equally important, they should reflect something of our constitutional balances. If we are going to be inexorably intertwined throughout the world, more of the institutions that go to make up the United States should be there, equally sinewed and provisioned. What I am suggesting clearly involves the systematic, “permanent” extension abroad of our institutions as well as technicians. If this development comes about our universities will be projected abroad in programs that root back into the American educational establishment with its century of loyalties and its wealth of influential connections.

Along with the arcanum of diplomacy and the military missions we need full representation overseas in the arts and science of civil living and development.

Are we to continue economic and technical assistance but carefully refrain from conveying any of our cultural values? Are we to resist communism only militarily? The Chinese Communists project the full thrust of their philosophy, their deepest beliefs. We will hardly abandon the field to them. If we compete with them, we will surely carry our values along.

We can discipline ourselves by consciously limiting our efforts to intrude our values and standards on an alien people. To limit, however, is not to eliminate. I should argue that our own beliefs require of us a minimum conduct of exemplifying in word and deed so far as our abilities permit, but within prudent limits, that respect for the individual which is really at the heart of our basic political beliefs.

Now we are told that respect for the individual is unique to the Judaeo-Christian tradition and that in those parts of the world where this tradition does not prevail, the idea of an individual as a morally cognizant and accountable single person endowed with rights is unintelligible or nearly so. My own experience in alien cultures still convinces me that there are men everywhere who yearn to live under what we call the “rule of law”—the idea that the state’s power must never be brought to bear arbitrarily against anyone, that rulers must give accounting, and that loyalty does not require bending the neck.

This idea is that part of mankind’s intellectual and moral heritage which happens to be our trust. Perhaps it has been a mistake to try to impose this idea in the past, and certainly efforts to impose it in the future will court frustration. But we can do no less than exemplify our ideals; and, if asked, we can attempt to help others put them into effect.