Mr. Chairman, during the past 20 years the cost of everything the farmer uses in production has advanced just as has the cost of what you and your constituents buy. A tractor which sold for $1,800 now costs between $6,000—maybe $8,000. A ton of fertilizer, a barrel of insecticide all cost more per unit, but a bushel of corn sells for less than one-half of what it brought in 1948. A bushel of wheat today brings the farmer—after including the value of Government payments—only $1.87. Twenty years ago with no Government payments at all, a bushel of wheat brought $2.28.

Admittedly, these are extreme cases but they represent some of our largest crops. When we take all farm production, we find that the price per unit is down 10 percent, what it was 20 years ago. During the same time the unit or hourly wage of all industrial workers has gone up 133 percent and the same unit wage of farmworkers has gone up 50 percent.

I know of no substantial segment of our economy other than farmers which has accepted any such reduction in returns for its labor or its products. Do any of you?

Now I know you will quickly say, "But we only propose to apply this rule to the large farms. Those large farms are evil. You and your committee should be joining us in punishing them because they are large, if for no other reason."

Gentlemen, I for one am not going to condemn either farmers, factories, labor unions, or governments just because they are large. If I did, I would have to attack my own Government. If any of these institutions, agricultural or nonagricultural, are bad, they should be restrained, but they should be judged on their actions, not their size.

But I do recognize that the large farms have more in common with modern industry than do the less efficient small farms. Undoubtedly the large farms, like large unions, are more capable of keeping the multitude of records which would absolutely destroy the small farmer. They are more able to employ the battery of lawyers so necessary to live in such an environment as is envisioned by this proposed legislation.

I don't know that all this justifies the complications involved in the new procedure, but even if we take a callous attitude toward large farming operations, how do we reconcile our action with the interests of the "small farmer" for whom every true rural politician's heart is expected to bleed. Don't we know that by and large the small farmer is today paying the lowest farm wages—he has to, to stay in business—and the fact that he can't pay higher wages keeps him "small." It is a very vicious cycle.

Farmers of all kinds, big and little, like to pay as high wages as they can. As a boy I picked cotton. In those days cotton often sold for about 10 cents. It is only a little more than twice that now. When cotton brought a dime, we got a dollar a hundred for picking.

If cotton went up to 12.5 cents, as it once in a while did, we got a dollar and a quarter; and when it went down, our wage went down in exact proportion. Nobody picks cotton now because it costs too much. Machines still keep the percentage of the value of the crop allocated to harvesting at about the old figure, but the point is that if we are willing to pay enough for farm products, farmers will always pay right good wages. Of course, farm wages are low because farm incomes are low, but there is no source from which these wages can be paid by either a big or a little farmer except from income.