

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. Chairman, the odd thing about this is that the representatives of the small farmers are in favor of this legislation.

Mr. POAGE. This question of who is the representative of whom has always intrigued me and I don't know who is the representative of whom.

I think you will find that everybody who comes up here professes to represent the small farmer. Certainly, that is true in our committee. We have 35 members and I think 36 of them would claim to represent the "small" farmer. I think that is just a fact of life.

You are not going to get anybody who comes up here who says he is opposed to the small farmer. That is like saying you are opposed to God, home, and mother.

Mr. SCHEUER. Incidentally, the statement I read was a statement made by Walter Reuther, as reported in the Los Angeles Times.

I am chagrined at your apparent lack of confidence not only in the so-called representatives of the farmers, both large and small, but in this institution of the Congress because your main objection to this legislation is not that it may not be right here and now, but you are concerned about what future Congresses may do to it.

I view my role in Congress, if I may quote Shakespeare, "perhaps 'tis a small thing, but mine own." We do the best we can with the limited information we have, with all the time pressures, and I have learned in the 3 years I have been here that men like you and others of my colleagues are enormously professional, knowledgeable, devoted to the public interest and have a real capacity and insight to meet the needs of our times and I have learned from you that I am part of a stream of history here with a noble past, a great present and an exciting future, and as I perform my insignificant contribution to the work of the Congress, I do so in full knowledge that the work I do and the work that this Congress does will be handed on to future generations of Congressmen just as devoted as we are, just as knowledgeable, just as concerned with the problems of their times, and I have no fear that I can have assurance in the actions of members of this committee and our own actions.

I must not deny myself the right to work on current legislation because I cannot have any assurance as to future committee action, and I quote your words, and I have learned this confidence and I have learned this love of this great institution from men like you who have been an inspiration to me.

Do you have any less confidence than I have as to the integrity of this body as an institution and as to the devotion of future members and their knowledge and their professionalism and their self-same concern with the public wheels that you have brought to the work of this Congress and the other distinguished Congresses.

Mr. POAGE. I don't think it involves their devotion, integrity——

Mr. SCHEUER. Their practicality, their knowledge.

Mr. POAGE. I think it is clear, however, that speaking as we try to do in our committee, again for the small farmer, for the 6 percent of the people who are now farming, the 6 million farm families, I should say, which is about 6 percent of our population, that we recognize that they have had less and less representation in this Congress, they have much less today than they had when I came into the Congress.