

is more poverty in rural America, proportionately, than there is in our cities.

In the metropolitan areas, one person in eight is poor by our standards. In the suburbs the ratio is 1 to 15. But in the rural areas one in every four persons qualifies under the same standard for the poverty program.

Some 30 percent of our total population live in rural areas, but 40 percent of the Nation's poor live there.

We can no longer permit the public policy to ignore our rural poor, or, if we do, we shall see a continuing movement of rural people to our central cities.

As the summer of 1967 illustrated, the slums and ghettos of the city breed hatred and violence, which is no solution to the problems of either city or country and, of course, when the farm people are forced off the farm, as they are being, rapidly, then, of course, there is no place for them to go but to the cities where they swell the slum areas and become unemployed.

We could carry this a bit further, and we could say, I think, that world poverty is primarily brought about because of underpayment to agriculture, and the loss in trade in the world in terms of the gross farm dollar.

Now, this leads me to one other conclusion, and that is that our Nation is in serious jeopardy from an economic standpoint unless something is done to raise farm prices.

Then the next logical question, of course, is: Well, now, if this is the case, what do you propose as a solution to the problem—and we think that the problem has to have a dual solution? We think that Government has to have a share in the responsibility for creating a climate, at least, where our economic situation can be improved. We believe that our present Government program should be extended. We believe that the general public has a responsibility to farmers as well as to themselves, to assist in working through the problem which we have.

In addition to this, we believe that farmers themselves must take a major share of the responsibility for the condition in which they find themselves, and we believe that it is only through organizing and bargaining collectively that the farmer can change his economic status.

Now this, of course, is the purpose of the National Farmers Organization. We are a relatively new farm group so far as the general farm organizations are concerned. But we believe that what must be done, we think that farmers must band themselves together in sufficient numbers under the protection of the Capper-Volstead Act so that they can bargain and sell together for a cost of production plus a reasonable profit price on their commodities.

We do not think you can limit this to just the minor commodities. Some bargaining has been done, mostly in local areas, in the minor commodities. But we believe that this is not the real problem in trying to bargain for agriculture. We think that you must bargain for the major commodities and, of course, there is only one way that you can effectively bargain, and that is to bring together enough of the total production over the entire Nation of not just one commodity but of any and all commodities so that the purchasers of our production cannot bypass the organization of farmers and supply their needs.