

With this in mind, the National Farmers Organization is organizing; we are now organizing, in some 35 States, with a little organization beginning in about five or six more. We have not completed the job, but we think that farmers owe it to themselves and to the Nation to band themselves together and bargain and sell together.

I think the alternative to solving our problem could very well lead to serious disaster for this Nation as a whole—not only for farmers but for this Nation as a whole.

We are now at about the lowest parity ratio that we have been in the United States since the middle 1930's and, of course, some of you gentlemen, I am sure all of you know, and many of you remember, the days of the 1930's so far as farming was concerned, and you know what happened to the rest of the Nation.

In other words, what I am trying to say is that depressions in this Nation have always been farm-bred and farm-led.

With the depressed state of agriculture as it is now in this country, I believe that we could very well be heading for the same type of problem, and I hesitate to predict, but I wonder if it would not be worse than anything we have ever seen before, unless something is done to right this situation, because with the extra assets of the Nation, the extra debt, I sometimes wonder if the Nation, as we know it today, can actually survive another serious depression.

So I believe that this is a concern of the Nation as well as a concern of the farmers, and we believe that the responsibility for correcting this situation will have to be shared by the farmers and by the people, and, of course, by that I mean Government action.

With this, I believe that I will terminate my remarks, and if there are any questions I will try to answer them.

Chairman PROXMIER. Thank you very much, Mr. Shafer. I would like to ask each of you gentlemen to get out your pencils and maybe jot a note or two and remember these questions. I would like to have each of you in turn comment on them.

The point has been made by several of you this afternoon, and I do believe wholeheartedly, that farm income is too low. In fact, the statistics given by Mr. Shafer at the end, I think, would be most impressive. Farm per capita income in 1966, the good farm year, \$1,700 or something like that; average nonfarm per capita income in 1966, was \$2,600. My questions are these: Do you support or oppose each of the following measures to improve farm income?

1. The Mondale approach, and let me very quickly say what that is. It has two parts. The first part would provide for a national agricultural relations board to administer bargaining between farm committees and processors.

The second part of it would extend the marketing agreement system to all commodities.

2. A land retirement program; do you support or oppose such a program?

3. Additional credit facilities for farmers provided by additional Federal credit action.

4. The next is expansion of the food-for-peace program.

5. Finally, the kind of proposal which was described—I think, by Mr. McDonald—Senator Metcalf has introduced, that would sub-