

Rep. Albert Gore
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It is most unfortunate for the farmer that farm legislation has become seethed in partisan politics. ~~As for me, I think a sound farm program is more important for the country than who wins a few congressional seats next year.~~

Extreme partisanship in farm legislation began last year with passage of the Aiken bill ^{the R.R. & C. bill} by a strict party vote at six o'clock on a Sunday morning when there were not even copies of the bill available so that members could know what they were voting on. That was a tragic mistake. And perhaps it was inevitable that that mistake would be pitched into the presidential and congressional campaign that followed.

The second mistake was the Brannan Plan and the Des Moines partisan conference which reeked of politics on farm legislation.

The third mistake is approval of the Brannan Plan by the House Agriculture Committee by a strict party vote.

Farmers are in a decided minority in the now industrialized United States. Therefore, when the farm problem becomes a partisan political football, the farmer is almost helpless and voiceless in the formulation of a program which means economic life or death for him.

Farmers are not for the Brannan Plan. All farm organizations save the left wing Farmers Union are opposed to it. No one single farm commodity group -- such as, the Tobacco Growers Association, the Cotton Council, cattle men, pork producers, wheat growers, etc. -- have endorsed the Brannan Plan.

I think it is fuzzy, befuddled politics to think we, the Democrats, can make political hay by force feeding the farmer something he does not want.

The Brannan Plan for cheap food to the consumer with the taxpayers paying the difference to the farmer in the form of a subsidy is dangerous. It was tried in Germany and their experience proved that subsidy on one commodity lead to subsidies on other commodities. It has been tried in Great Britain with the same experience.

Secretary Brannan proposes to scrap our present price support program on hogs, for instance, and substitute his program of cheap pork to the consumer with the taxpayer making up the difference to the farmer. Now, let us just take this as an example and see how it will work out. To begin with the Department of Agriculture estimated last month that next year we would have the largest pork production in the history of the country -- 17 billion pounds of live hog. Despite this increased and unprecedented supply, the Brannan Plan proposed to increase the support price by three dollars per hundred pounds. This three dollar increase in support alone on 17 billion pounds of live pork would represent an added burden to the taxpayer of more than 500 million dollars. But this added cost would be only incidental when compared to the more serious aspects of this subsidy payment on pork. Every one acknowledges that the program would result in more and more hogs and cheaper and cheaper pork at the meat counter. Is anyone so naive to think that cheap pork would not drag down the price of other protein foods? Does anyone really believe that when the American housewife goes to the meat counter that she would buy high priced beef or chicken or mutton or cheese when she could get a nice fat pork roast for one-half the cost of production? Of course, every practical person knows that cheap pork in the meat counter will pull down all other meat products with it. But under this bill there would be no subsidy payment to the farmer except on pork. Nevertheless, all of his meat production prices would be dragged down. Then, when all meat prices are dragged down, what happens to grain products? The answer is obvious. The price of grain and the price of live stock are inseparably tied together. So, when grain products come down the government will have to support grain products, too.

When the whole agriculture price structure is dragged down and the subsidy payments become so unbearably large that the government has to call a halt to subsidy payments, how will we then restore some parity to the farmer? Tragic consequences for the farmer are inherent in the Brannan Plan.

We have a farm program

~~I am opposed to both the Aiken Bill and the Brannan Plan.~~

~~will offer a substitute bill to extend our present time tested farm program.~~