

## NATIONAL AID TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE.

When Agriculture Prospers Every Other Industry Flourishes—When Agriculture Declines Every Other Industry Suffers.

### SPEECH

OF

HON. DICK T. MORGAN,

OF OKLAHOMA,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

*Tuesday, July 9, 1912,*

On the bill (H. R. 22871) to establish agricultural extension departments in connection with agricultural colleges in the several States receiving the benefits of an act of Congress approved July 2, 1862, and of acts supplementary thereto.

Mr. MORGAN said:

Mr. SPEAKER: There is one bill on the calendar of the House that I would like to see passed at this session of Congress. It is H. R. 22871, introduced by the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. LEVER. The object of the bill is to establish extension departments or divisions in connection with the agricultural colleges of the various States. Through these departments it is proposed to send instructors out among the farmers to convey useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics. These expert teachers sent out by the agricultural colleges will impart information through field instruction, demonstrations, publications, and otherwise. As our farmers can not go to our agricultural colleges to receive this instruction the bill proposes to send instructors to the farmers. The Committee on Agriculture has reported this bill favorably. The report says:

Section 4 is the appropriating section of the bill and provides that a sum of \$10,000 shall be appropriated annually to each State which shall assent to the provisions of the act. This annual appropriation is a straight, unconditional appropriation to the several States, and amounts each year to a charge upon the Treasury of \$480,000. The additional sum of \$300,000 is appropriated for the fiscal year 1914 and an annual increase of this appropriation of \$300,000 a year, over the preceding year, for a period of nine years is provided until the total amount of additional appropriations will be the sum of \$3,000,000 annually. But these additional appropriations, or this sum of \$3,000,000 annually, is to be allotted among the several States in the proportion which their rural population bears to the total rural population of the United States, as determined by the next preceding Federal census.

The object of this bill is to encourage agriculture, and I am heartily in accord with the main purpose and object of the measure, and will gladly give the same my enthusiastic support.

The bill should, however, be amended so as to require this instruction to be given in graded rural schools, as well as to actual farmers. In order to indicate my views on this question

I have introduced H. R. 20282, which, in the main, follows the Lever bill, except that the bill which I have introduced broadens the scope of the bill so as to require that the instruction provided shall be given "in graded public schools in districts of not less than 25 square miles and to other persons who may be present at the time such instruction and demonstrations may be given." In the first place, I believe the National Government, so far as it can under the Constitution, should encourage the organization and maintenance of rural graded schools; and, in the second place, this instruction should be given to the boys of to-day who will be the farmers of tomorrow. If this instruction is to be given, if this appropriation is to be made and we shall send instructors to the various counties of the States, I protest against passing by the country schoolhouse. When this bill shall be reached for consideration I propose to offer an amendment which require the proposed instruction to be given to the students in graded rural schools.

I am willing to vote for any reasonable appropriation for the promotion of agriculture, but I think we should exercise great care to see that the money shall be expended to the best advantage—where it will do the most good to the greatest number and where the benefits therefrom will be the most widely distributed and bring the greatest returns to the country at large.

I have a letter from the Hon. John Fields, editor of the Oklahoma Farm Journal, urging that the proposed legislation shall provide that instruction shall be given to students in graded rural schools as well as to actual farmers. In this letter Mr. Fields says:

Vast sums have been expended for the development of agricultural colleges and district agricultural schools, and the former have done a large amount of very useful and necessary work. The great educational problem which is as yet unsolved is the improvement of the system of schools where 98 per cent of the children get their only education. Money from the State and Nation have worked a great improvement in facilities for higher education. Money from the State and Nation properly applied will work a similar improvement in the system of schools for elementary education, and such improvement will not come without it.

Of the various measures before Congress which I have examined looking toward an extension of knowledge concerning scientific agriculture among the people of the country, none except your bill strikes at the root of the difficulty.

The views of Mr. Fields are entitled to great weight. He has had wide experience as an educator in agricultural colleges. He is rapidly taking rank as one of the foremost writers in agricultural journalism. He is a man of broad views, sound judgment, with progressive and practical ideas. He is enthusiastic in his efforts to advance agriculture and sincerely devoted to the cause of Oklahoma farmers. I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness to him for many valuable suggestions relative to the promotion of agriculture and the upbuilding of the farming interests.

#### FOUR PROPOSITIONS.

There are many unanswerable arguments in favor of legislation for the promotion of agriculture. Here are a number of propositions which, to my mind, are self-evident:

First. Agriculture should grow as rapidly as our population.  
Second. The production of food products should increase as rapidly as our population.

Third. The rural population should increase as rapidly as our urban population.

Fourth. Agriculture should grow as rapidly as other leading industries.

The official statistics issued by the Census Bureau reveal the fact that the affirmative of not one of these propositions is true.

First. Agriculture is not growing as rapidly as our population.

During the last decade—

1. Our population increased 21 per cent.
2. Our farm land increased 5 per cent.
3. The number of our farms increased 10.9 per cent.
4. The amount of our improved land increased 15.4 per cent.

Second. The production of food products is not increasing as rapidly as population.

During the last decade—

1. Our population increased 21 per cent.
2. The acreage devoted to the production of cereals increased 7.3 per cent.
3. The production of cereals increased but 1.7 per cent.

Third. Our rural population is not increasing as rapidly as our urban population.

From 1899 to 1909—

1. Our urban population increased 34 per cent.
2. Our rural population increased 11 per cent.

Fourth. Agriculture is not growing as rapidly as commerce and manufacturing.

This is shown by the fact that in 1911—

1. Our agricultural products were worth less than \$9,000,000,000.
2. Our manufactured products were worth more than \$20,000,000,000.
3. Our internal commerce was estimated at \$26,000,000,000.

#### MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED.

In reaching a conclusion as to the interest the National Government should manifest in the growth of agriculture and the amount of appropriation we should make for its promotion, we should take in consideration a number of important matters. Among them we may mention the following:

1. The great area of unimproved land.
2. Our large appropriations for other purposes.
3. The welfare of the people engaged in agriculture.
4. The interest which the nonagricultural classes have in the growth of agriculture.
5. Danger of concentration of population in our great cities.
6. The importance of both industrial independence and industrial equilibrium.
7. The relation agriculture bears to other industries.

#### AREA OF UNIMPROVED LAND.

There is room for the expansion of agriculture. We have 3,000,000 square miles of territory. We have 1,903,000,000 acres of land. We have 878,000,000 acres of land included within our farms. We have 478,000,000 acres of improved farm land. Less than half of our total area is included in our farms. Only half of our farm land is improved. Three-fourths of our total land area is uninhabited, unoccupied, untilled, unimproved, and unproductive.

## APPROPRIATIONS FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

We appropriate annually from six to seven hundred millions of dollars to meet the ordinary expenses of this Government. Scarcely 1 per cent of our total appropriations go to aid agriculture—an industry that feeds, clothes, educates, and supports 45 per cent of our people. Six hundred and twenty-five million dollars have been spent to improve our rivers and harbors; \$67,000,000 have been spent to maintain agricultural colleges and experimental stations; \$625,000,000 to aid commerce and stimulate the growth of our cities; \$67,000,000 to encourage agriculture and develop the country districts. Millions of dollars are annually expended in constructing Federal buildings to adorn and beautify our cities and add to the convenience and enjoyment of their inhabitants, but so far nothing has been expended to construct public highways—to increase the comforts, conveniences, and profits of our farmers.

Four hundred millions of dollars soon will have been paid out in the construction of the Panama Canal. We are all proud of this great achievement, which will remain for ages a monument proclaiming what the American people did for the promotion of the commerce of the civilized world. The National Government may never do so great a service for agriculture, but I hope the very laws we enact for its promotion may stand as a fitting monument to show our appreciation of the importance of this industry and our deep interest in the welfare of the 6,400,000 farmers of the United States.

## NUMBER OF PERSONS ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE.

Our appropriations to encourage agriculture have not been in proportion to the number of people engaged in this great industry nor commensurate with its importance to the welfare of our country.

Over 41,000,000 of our people reside upon farms. Forty-five per cent of our population are farmers. Nearly one-half of all our people are engaged in agriculture. We have 6,400,000 farmers. We have over 11,000,000 persons over 10 years of age at work on our farms. These toiling millions are entitled to more than our sympathy, good will, and friendly interest. They are worthy every aid, encouragement, and assistance within our power to render. Their welfare alone is sufficient reason why we should exercise all our constitutional power to develop agriculture, to promote its prosperity, to extend its growth, and to secure its rapid, perpetual, and ever-increasing expansion and advancement.

## NONEARMING POPULATION INTERESTED.

The National Government should promote agriculture not only in the interest of farmers, but also for the sake of those who are not farmers; for the benefit of our merchants, business and professional men; especially to help the wage earners—the men employed in mechanical pursuits, the men at work in our shops, factories, and manufacturing establishments, and the men who operate our great transportation companies. All classes must look to the farm for the food they eat and for the production of the raw material from which their clothing is made. The cost of living is a problem that confronts every man. An inadequate supply of food and clothing means increased cost of living. From 1899 to 1909 the acreage devoted to cereals in the United States increased but 7.3 per cent; the pro-

duction of cereals in bushels increased but 1.7 per cent. In the meantime our population increased 21 per cent. Think of it! Our population increasing at the rate of 21 per cent; our food products increasing at a rate of less than 2 per cent. This process can not continue with safety to our country and its people. Therefore, when I advocate larger appropriations for the revival, expansion, and advancement of agriculture, I speak not for farmers alone. I plead the cause of all our people whose health, happiness, and welfare will be conserved, guarded, and promoted through the growth of agriculture.

#### CONCENTRATION OF POPULATION IN OUR CITIES.

One of the real dangers which threatens this country is the concentration of our population in our great cities. New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia have 10 per cent of our population. Cities with 100,000 population or more have 25 per cent of our population. Fifty-five per cent of our people are in cities and towns. Thirty years ago the towns and cities had but 30 per cent of our population. In 1880 there were two men in the country to produce food for one man in the city. We are now nearing a point when one man in the country must provide food for two men in the city. During the last decade our urban population increased 34 per cent; our rural population increased but 11 per cent. Where is this thing to end? If this ever-increasing drift of population to our cities can not be turned back, at no far-distant day we will see 300,000,000 people in the United States, three-fourths of whom will be in our towns and cities. Such a condition would weaken the fabric of our Government, endanger our free institutions, and cause thoughtful men to shudder for the safety of the Republic.

#### INDUSTRIAL INDEPENDENCE AND INDUSTRIAL EQUILIBRIUM.

Industrial independence and industrial equilibrium are both essential to our national welfare. We should be self-sustaining as a Nation. We should feed and clothe our own people. Our industrial growth should be symmetrical, harmonious, and well balanced. Agriculture, commerce, mining, and manufacturing should go hand in hand. These great industries should keep abreast in the march of progress. It should not be our policy to check the growth of commerce, to hamper the development of our mineral resources, to retard the upward trend of trade and transportation, or to restrain the splendid growth of our manufacturing industries. "Progress in every line of industrial activity" should be our motto. All our industries, all our enterprises, all our business interests should be encouraged, aided, and fostered. But agriculture should not be permitted to lag behind. To avoid such a danger, such an evil, such a misfortune, such a menace, and such a calamity to our country and all its people we should unite in an earnest, intelligent, determined, and practical effort to place and keep agriculture where it belongs—in the very forefront of our industrial procession.

#### RELATION AGRICULTURE BEARS TO OTHER INDUSTRIES.

In determining the amount of appropriation we shall make to promote agriculture we must not lose sight of the nature and character of this industry. We must keep in mind the relation it bears to all other industries. Agriculture is a basic industry. Other industries depend upon it for existence. Trade, transportation, commerce, mining, manufacturing look to it for sup-

port. Millions are employed in marketing and transporting farm products. Millions are employed in manufacturing articles which the farmers purchase and consume.

The magnificent superstructure of our industrial edifice rests upon agriculture. When agriculture prospers, every other industry flourishes. When agriculture declines, every other industry suffers. When agriculture wanes, the bloom of every other business withers. Invisible, but realistic tendrils bind all other industries to agriculture. From it they draw life, vigor, and vitality. Giving to agriculture is simply a method, a means, a process of distributing benefits to other industries. Money diverted from the National Treasury to promote agriculture, like the dews of heaven, will return to revive, to renew, and to reinvigorate every other industry and enterprise, and to help and bless those employed in every other business, calling, and profession of life.

#### GROWTH OF AGRICULTURE.

The growth of agriculture must come, first, through an increase in the yield per acre; second, through extension of the area in cultivation; third, through enlargement in the number of our farms; and, fourth, through additions to the number of our farmers. The increased yield per acre will come through better methods, and better methods will come through education, instruction, and training. We will have more land in cultivation, more farms and more farmers as the farm becomes more attractive and more profitable. One way to increase the profits of the farm would be to cheapen the cost of the distribution of farm products. The farmer gets only 46 per cent of the retail price of his products. The middlemen get 56 per cent of what the consumer pays for farm products. In the interest of both the farmer and consumer—to give the farmer more profits and the consumer cheaper food—we must devise more economical methods of transporting, handling, and distributing the products of the farm to the residents of our towns and cities. The farm can be made more attractive by improving the social conditions of the farm; by adding to the comforts, conveniences, advantages, and opportunities of farm life; by reducing the hardships, drudgery, physical discomfort, and exposure incident to the farm; and by giving to the farmers and their families more of the pleasures and enjoyments of life, and more time for study, reading, self-culture, and recreation.

#### BETTER FACILITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND EDUCATION.

There are three things that will contribute materially to the advancement of agriculture. The farm must have better facilities for transportation, better means of communication, and better opportunities for education.

Hon. John Fields, in the Oklahoma Farm Journal, recently said:

The character and extent of facilities for communication, education, and transportation determine the growth and progress of country communities.

These are practical problems, and the National Government is in a position to aid in solving them.

Improvement in the means and methods of transportation is one of the wonders of the age. But these improved transportation facilities do not reach the farm. They do not touch farm life. We talk of subsidizing our merchant marine to

develop foreign commerce. We boast of our internal commerce, which, it is said, equals the foreign commerce of all nations. But we hear nothing of any movement to increase our rural commerce—a commerce that will develop trade, transportation, business, communication, intercourse, and travel between the farms and the towns and cities. Improved transportation facilities for interurban traffic has been the one great factor in building up our great cities. The extension of rural commerce, through improved rural transportation facilities, will be the one great factor in building up the country and the smaller cities and towns. The extension of rural commerce must come largely through the improvement of our public highways. We are behind other nations in the character of our public roads. Good roads are so essential to the extension of rural commerce that the National Government should make liberal appropriations for their improvement. The House of Representatives has passed a good-roads measure. Should this provision become a law, something like \$20,000,000 annually will be taken from the National Treasury to aid the States in improving our highways. I voted for this provision. I did not approve all the details of the measure, but I approved the policy of national aid for good roads.

We have over 40,000 rural mail carriers making daily trips through the rural districts. This service must be extended until the daily mail reaches practically every one of our 6,400,000 farm homes. The Rural Mail Service must be made an instrument for the extension of our rural commerce. Our rural mail carriers must be utilized to develop trade, transportation, business, commerce, communication, intercourse, and travel between the city and the country.

The great express companies—constituting a mighty monopoly—must in some way be brought in a position to give a larger service to the rural districts. Whether this shall come through proper regulation and control of these great corporations, or through condemnation proceedings and purchase by the Government, or by the Government establishing an independent express post, we do not now know; but we do know that in some way the farmers of the United States are entitled to have greatly improved facilities for the transportation of packages, and that the express companies must be made to serve in a much larger way the 6,400,000 farmers of the United States.

#### PARCEL POST.

The Republican Party has again demonstrated that it is the party of progress and constructive statesmanship. In the platform adopted at its national convention, which convened at Chicago June 18, 1912, this great party declared for the establishment of a parcel post. The declaration is as follows:

In the interest of the general public, and particularly of the agricultural or rural communities, we favor legislation looking to the establishment, under proper regulations, of a parcel post, the postal rates to be graduated under a zone system in proportion to the length of carriage.

I am proud of the fact the Republican Party was the first of the great political organizations to declare for a parcel post, which means the extension of rural commerce, the upbuilding of the farm, the advancement of agriculture, and additional profits to the farmers in the United States, because through

this prosperity of the farm our towns and cities will grow, the merchants will have increased business, wage earners will have cheaper food, and all our people will reap untold benefits.

IMPROVED FACILITIES FOR COMMUNICATION.

The farm must have improved facilities for communication with the outside world. The isolation of the farm must be overcome. The social life of the farm must be brought in touch with the pulse beat of society in our towns and cities. The farm and city must be brought closer together. Our postal service must be extended, improved, and perfected. The telephone must go into every farm home. The great telegraph systems must be made to articulate with rural telephones. Distance between the farm and the city must be annihilated, and the farmers must be given the same facilities for communication with the great commercial and industrial world that are enjoyed by the residents of towns and cities.

BETTER EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES.

The farm must have better educational facilities. The country must have better schools. The boys and girls in the country must have better educational advantages. They must be placed upon an equal footing with the boys and girls in the towns and cities. Inferior educational advantages is one of the drawbacks to country life. The absence of graded district schools contributes to the depopulation of our farms. Farmers are constantly deserting the farm to find better schools elsewhere.

In the United States to-day we have 17,813,852 persons of school age. But in all our normal schools, colleges, and universities there are but 308,146 students. Only 0.017 per cent of our young people ever enter our higher institutions of learning. In my own State of Oklahoma there are 518,690 persons of school age. In all our normal schools, colleges, and universities we have but 3,945 students. In other words, only seven-tenths of 1 per cent of Oklahoma children of school age are attending our normal schools, colleges, and universities.

We have been lavish in our expenditures in providing colleges for the education of 1 per cent of our children. We have neglected the 99 per cent who never enter our higher institutions of learning. This process can not continue without the most detrimental consequences to the character of American citizenship. I do not advocate the abandonment of colleges and universities, but I plead for better educational advantages for the millions of boys and girls on the farms who can not attend college, who do not live in towns and cities where they can attend high schools, and who do not have even the educational advantages which would be offered by a graded district school. [Applause.]

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