

### National Grange Columnist Analyzes Legislative Problem

By Jack Jackson

Much has been written and said regarding the lack of new or effective farm legislation provided by the 85th Congress. Chances are you have also heard that disunity between farm organization has resulted in the dissolution of the farm bloc and that farm organizational efforts to influence legislation are no longer effective.

There is some truth in such statements. However, the statements are not wholly true and are very misleading unless viewed in the light of all facts involved. It is true that the influence of the so-called farm bloc has declined sharply. It is not true that this decline started this year; it has been under way for several years.

Disunity between farm organizations has no doubt contributed to the decline, but a lack of agreement between major farm organizations is not the sole—or even the major—factor involved. Sharp differences have also developed along political, sectional and commodity lines.

More important than differences between these groups, however, is a general change in public opinion—a new public opinion representing the collective thinking of a population which is now 88% nonfarm. Unfortunately, millions of Americans have been provided no opportunity to consider all facts about farm programs.

Instead, they have been fed distorted facts and outright misinformation which has turned them against farm aid in any form—and yes, even against farmer's themselves.

Many persons in position of influence have—in an effort to discredit farm programs they do not like—appealed directly to the 88% of the people not directly involved in farming. In doing so, they have played-up and even misrepresented the cost of all farm programs and other adverse effects they have on consumers.

For example, in explaining the defeat of the Omnibus Farm Bill in June, the editor of one of the nation's major metropolitan newspapers told his readers that price supports to farmers cost taxpayers \$5 billion last year, and that

unless voters demanded a halt to such program the cost would increase to \$6 billion for the coming year.

The one very weak thread of truth in this editorial was that figures used referred to all money appropriated to and spent by the Department of Agriculture. Thus, readers were led to believe that they were helping to provide some \$5 billion to be paid out directly to farmers. Imagine what the reaction of those struggling to meet their own family bills must have been when they read that they were contributing to a \$5 billion fund to support higher farm prices which would push their own food costs even higher.

The reader's reaction would have been quite different had the editor explained some of the fol-

lowing USDA expenditures for projects serving the public as well as the farmer:

- (a) An \$843 million export program—a program which the Secretary of Agriculture describes as "An Ambassador of Good Will which is helping keep the free world free;"
- (b) about half a billion dollars to REA loans—to be repaid with interest;
- (c) \$28 million for market research—resulting in new practices which reduce marketing costs by many millions of dollars annually;
- (d) \$19 million for Federal Meat Inspection—to assure the public a supply of clean and wholesome meat;
- (e) about \$150 million on school lunch and milk programs—assuring millions of children a more adequate diet;
- (f) \$234 million for foods donated to foreign countries—foods that went to 60 million persons in 86 countries;
- (g) \$120 million for running the U. S. Forest Service—a service which provided recreational facilities to 45 million citizens last year, and (h) many, many others serving the general public as well as farmers.

In a democracy, government

policy is determined by the thinking of ALL citizens, not merely by those directly affected by the policy involved. Nonfarm people, who now make up 88% of the total U. S. population, therefore, play an important role in determining farm policy. Unless these people are provided factual information giving them an opportunity to properly study and evaluate problems involved, effective farm legislation will become increasingly difficult to obtain.

A harmonious relationship between farm and nonfarm people

is, therefore, as important as harmony between farm organizations, sectional, political, and commodity groups. Yes, it is even more important because when the public becomes united in its thinking, other groups will be forced to get together. Therefore, an increasingly important job of farmers and farm organizations is to provide the public with factual information—information to counteract the efforts of those who would turn public thinking against all farm programs and against farm people themselves.

### AAA Has To Get

### Gas For Some Forgetful Drivers

Out-of-gas calls amount to 27 per cent of the calls for AAA service received from motorists on limited access highways, according to the Oregon State Motor Association.

This type of call amounts to only four per cent of the calls for service from motorists as a whole, the association said.

"The tendency to drive onto a limited access highway, where service facilities are rare, without checking the gas supply, results in this preponderance of service calls," the Oregon AAA club said. "That is the reason the AAA advocates 'driving on the top of the tank' when using limited access highways."

Calls for tire service amount to 19 per cent of the calls received from motorists stranded on limited access highways, the club reports.

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From where I sit... by Joe Marsh

Curly "Eggs" 'Em In

Well, we've had drive-in restaurants, drive-in movies, drive-in banks. Now a drive-in caddy. It was inevitable.

Curly Rice and his Missus have sold eggs retail at their place for some time. "But all that running back and forth," exclaims Mrs. Rice, "it fairly wore you out."

"So we set aside one room for the egg business. We enlarged a window about car height, and circled the driveway past it. It's efficient—but it cuts 'visiting' with customers and you know how I love to talk!"

From where I sit, I'll go along with Curly's wife—because there's nothing like good talk between good neighbors—especially when there's a healthy difference of opinions. Now you might like some cider to help the conversation along—I happen to prefer a glass of beer. As long as we agree on our right to disagree what does it matter?

Joe Marsh

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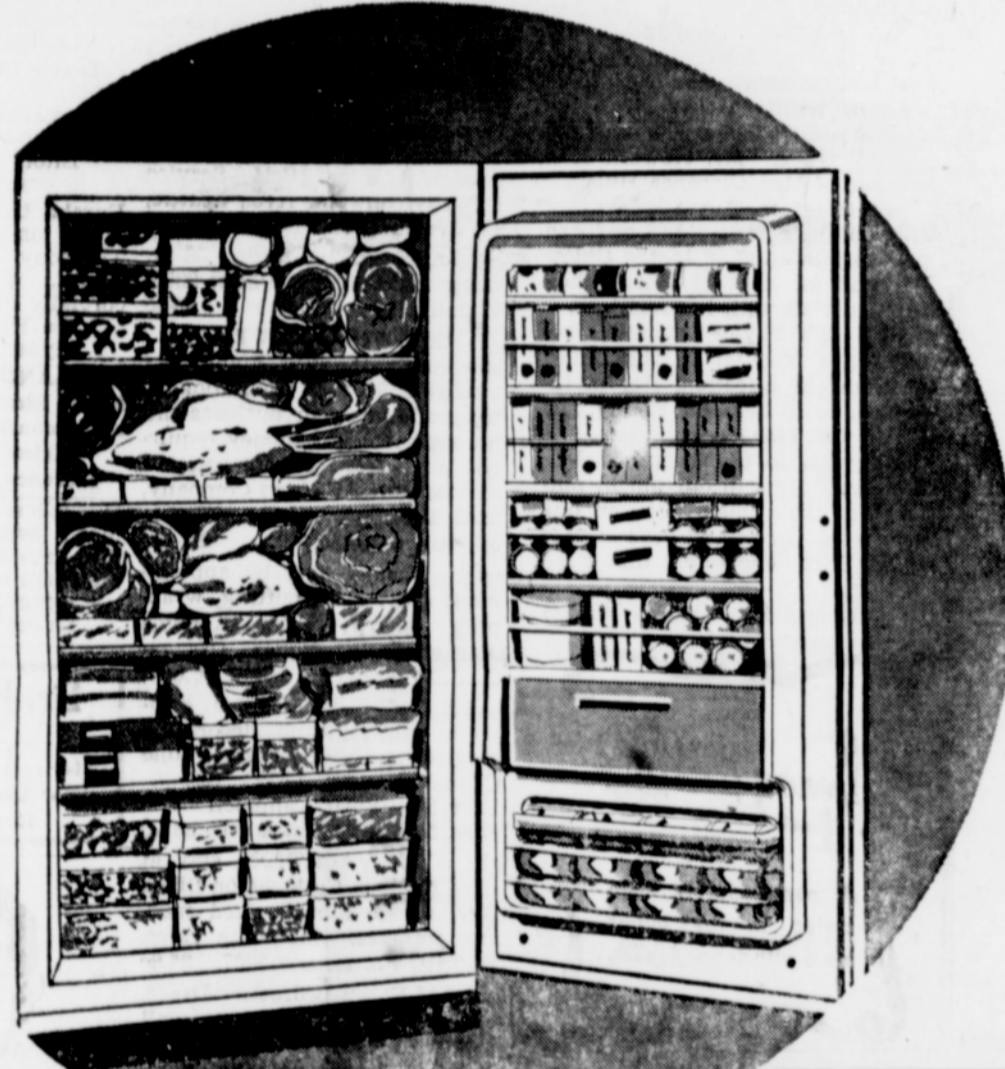
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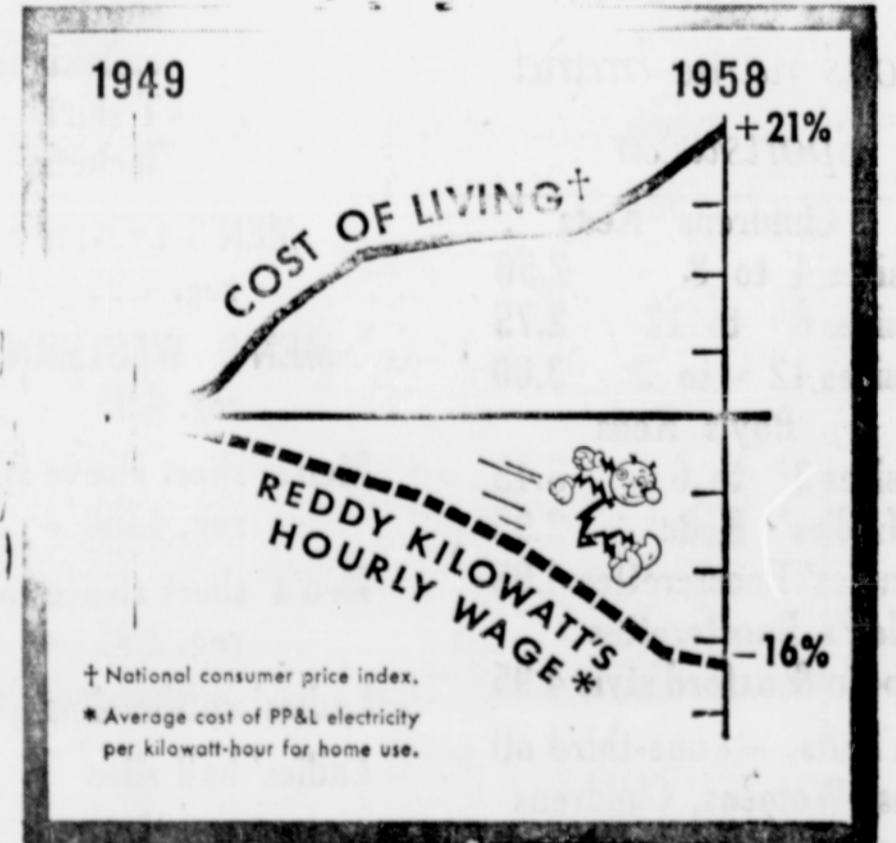
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