

News Release
(Congressman Bob Dole)

Salina, Kansas - September 19, 1963 (Thursday)

Congressman Bob Dole, in a statement following Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman's "Report and Review" meeting in Salina, Wednesday evening, states "Freeman obviously is not interested in wheat legislation at this time. He knows any word of encouragement now would mean additional planting in winter wheat areas." The scheduled meetings are purely and simply a maneuver to delay consideration of any program which could benefit winter wheat producers.

All in all, it was "Freeman's Night" - he heard what he wanted nearly all the time - said what he wanted all the time and was in complete command. This was not a "Report and Review" meeting, but a "Repeat and Retreat" session to give Freeman a way out and get him off the hook.

Farmers expressed themselves clearly on May 21 in rejecting the Administration's program providing for unprecedented strict mandatory controls but the Secretary has wanted, and has led the public to believe the vote indicated farmers were satisfied and not interested in legislation this year. To the contrary, as he knows, farmers desire and would accept a reasonable voluntary program which would leave the decision making up to the farmers rather than government officials.

Nearly everyone interested in Agriculture can easily predict that following Freeman's American visits, and after all winter wheat is planted, he will "Reverse the field" and in a "widely heralded" announcement proclaim that wheat farmers are interested - that any wheat program should be voluntary, and that he will work every effort to help enact such a program early in 1964.

This is a "Rehabilitation Tour", as I have said before, and should Freeman reach any other conclusion, President Kennedy will simply find another Secretary of Agriculture. 1964 is an election year and without question, the Kennedy Administration will discover a belated, but renewed and politically warm interest in the American wheat producer, and American farmer generally.

-2-

Dole stated - "While not present to embarrass the Secretary, I did want to see first hand what was going on and also be in a position to keep the record straight following the meeting." "Secretary Freeman is a skilled politician, a fact recognized by members of the House Agriculture Committee and as I represent many of those present, some agreeing and some not, I felt it my responsibility to be at the meeting."

"My observations of the meeting briefly were -

1. Farmers are and have been interested in a "voluntary" wheat program. Members of Congress have known this for months and have informed Freeman of it, but he was so bitter about the Referendum, he could not listen. On July 12, one day before Freeman left to tour five Communist countries, I pointed out the great interest in my district and that I had had some 500 letters concerning wheat legislation.

2. The crowd was responsive but should have been, considering Freeman is a top Democrat and, therefore, many of the party faithful were present from throughout Kansas. Another consideration would be the fact that the top A.S.C. officials were active in arranging the meeting and encouraging attendance of A.S.C. committeemen and office personnel from all over Kansas, plus the fact that those primarily interested in the meeting have been sympathetic to Freeman's programs. In my opinion, perhaps 50 percent present were A.S.C. employees and Democratic party officials, and the remaining 50 percent, farmers.

3. Freeman's answers were evasive and incomplete; in the 2 hours and 20 minute meeting, Freeman controlled 2 hours, or 85 percent of it. During the 20 minute oral discussion period, only a few farmers responded and some of those with "Freeman commercials." One was an ardent Democrat with a brother

-3-

on Freeman's payroll at more than \$12,000.00 per year and an uncle who is an A.S.C. county committeeman - another indicated he was an A.S.C. official - another representing the N.F.O. - another ardent Democrat who frequently writes caustic letters about anyone who takes issue with Orville. In the final analysis, only a few, (perhaps 5 or 6), had an opportunity to present real problems and offer serious suggestions.

4. Freeman continually ducked the "Anfuso" amendment. He could not explain why a farmer who overplants, and overharvests, and hence is not eligible for price support, should be threatened with loss of acreage history in the event of a program. Freeman failed to point out the 15 acre, or less, wheat producer can overseed at will without any loss of history and that a farmer not now producing or perhaps has never produced wheat can now raise all he wishes, build a history and attempt to get an allotment in any future program. The point is not whether the farmer overplants, but is that he should be able to make the choice freely. While farmers should not gain history for overplanting when market quotas are in effect, neither should he lose when marketing quotas are not in effect and particularly when the overplanter receives no benefits. It's just the same old story of the historical wheat producer getting the short end of the stick. No such threatened penalty applies to cotton, rice, peanuts, or tobacco, the other "basic" commodities.

5. He ducked the question about growth of U.S.D.A. employees. While it took 76,276 employees 10 years ago, the Department asked for 121,583 in fiscal 1964. In the 3 year period (fiscal) June 30, 1961 to June 30, 1964, this represents an increase of 19,026 persons -- the equivalent of one U.S. Army field division.

-4-

He did not answer the question on government costs of the wheat referendum and the question about the parity index averaging 78 percent in August which was the lowest since 1939. In other words, prices paid by farmers for goods and services in relation to prices received continued to decline.