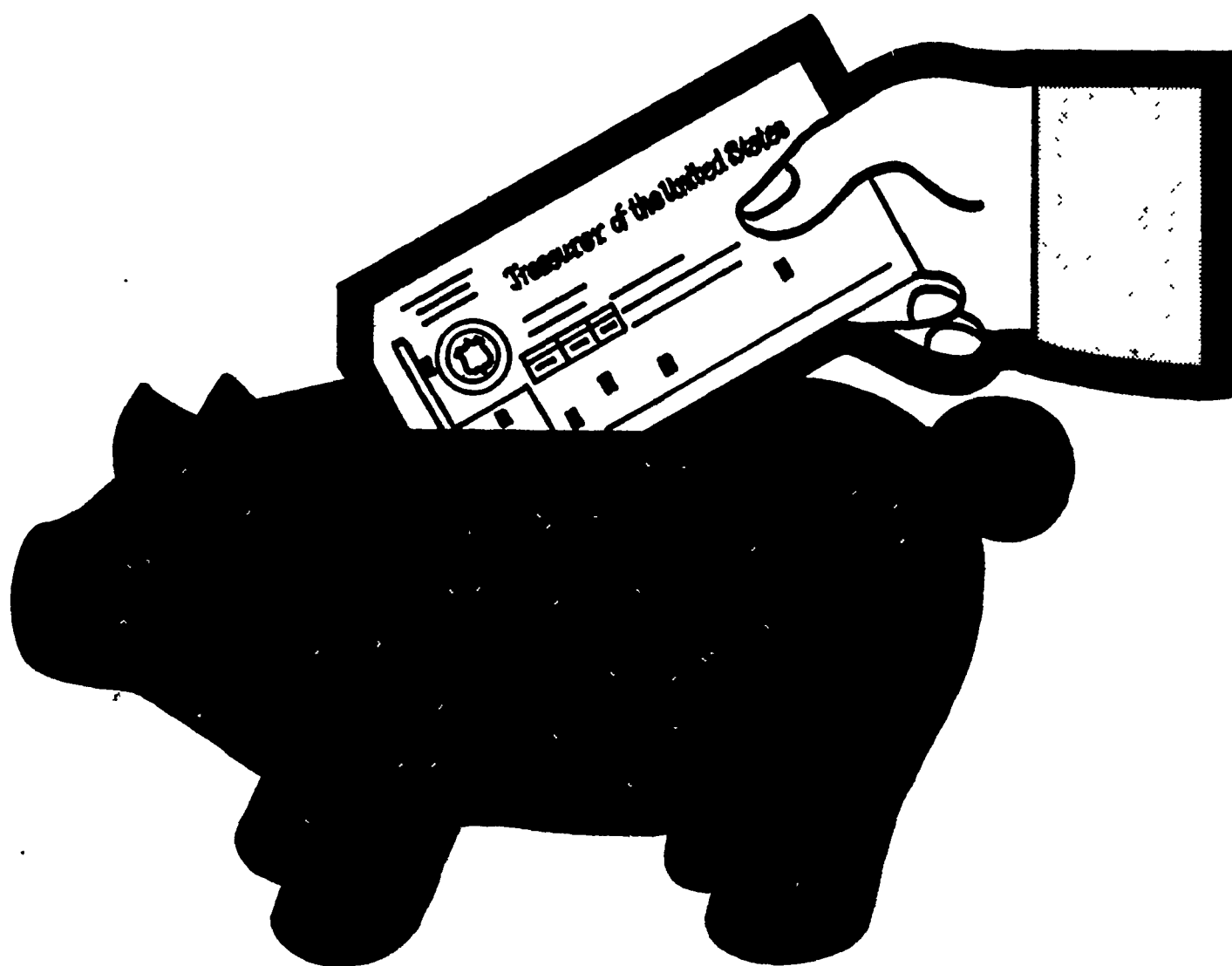


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From the Senate Side

The rising price of food has caused some Americans to question our overseas sale of farm products - particularly our grain sales to Russia. This is understandable in light of the bad experience we have had with previous grain deals with the Soviet Union.

The Ford Administration is in the process of changing the style of the ballgame, however. We are now looking toward telling the Russians that we'll sell you foodstuffs in return for your fuel supplies.

This is a responsible approach to world trade as it affects our own national interests. Food is a commodity we have in surplus to sell. It should be used to buy those things that we need from the rest of the world.

Let's not kid ourselves. We cannot decide to withdraw within our own borders and ignore what the rest of the world has been selling us. We are a nation comprising 6 percent of the global population and we consume 30 percent of the world's raw materials. Obviously, we must continue to look beyond our own borders to get the things we need just to maintain our present standard of living.

That means we have to have something to offer the world in return. That something used to be dollars, but the dollar had dropped in value and prestige in the world's market. What we have today that the world wants badly is food.

Therefore, a responsible policy, both in terms of domestic needs and foreign trade, should encourage farmers to grow and produce as much food as possible. We should be planting on every available acre and trying to increase the yield per acre. The more we produce the more we have to trade for things like petroleum, chromium, bauxite, etc.

This kind of policy is precisely the reverse of the tragic programs sold to us by the liberals several years ago. Those programs encouraged farmers not to grow by paying them for fields left unplanted. Some would have us believe that a return to similar policies would be in our best interests. To my way of thinking, the only interests that would be served by "no-grow" programs would be those who wish to see the American people denied access to world markets.

Of course, all of this depends on offering the farmer a fair return on his investment. He cannot be expected to grow increasing supplies of food only to take a loss on his labors. Rather, he must be assured that he will be able to sell what he grows at a price that compensates him for his costs and his labor.

With food products as our main commodity for world trade, we can remain competitive with the nations who are attempting to gain power with products like oil. To ignore our ability and capacity to produce food will bring us long-range tragedy.