

Butz addresses York meeting

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year to farmers . . . that's been cut down to half a billion dollars now. Four years ago we were spending a million dollars a day in storage costs, that's been cut virtually to the vanishing point. Four years ago the best we could do in net farm income in this country in the agribusiness was 17.3 billion dollars, which included four billion dollars of government payments. We just finished three years now in which net income has stopped \$25-billion. The best indications are it's going to do that again in 1976, without government payments. It's been a turn-around in farm policy.

"There's always one part of agriculture that's up, and another one down. These are average figures. There are exceptions." Butz also indicated that farm exports have tripled in the last four years from \$7-billion to \$22-billion and predicted that this year they would be just a little over \$22-billion. "We're going to export 100-million tons of grain from this country this year - including rice and soybeans." Agriculture is the number one earner of foreign exchange in this country, and is responsible for having put this country's trade-balance in the black. "And this puts us (agriculture) in a tremendous position of strength in this country, I think, to do that.

"People argue with me that if we just didn't export, food would be cheaper at home, some people say," Butz continued. "That's as phoney as a \$3 bill. We've got to export or cut back on production."

According to Butz there is five cents worth of wheat in a one-pound loaf of bread, which represents about one-ninth of the cost. "Eight-ninth of the cost of a loaf of bread is what somebody else put into it (costs). "Today it costs more to drive the bread from the bakery to the supermarket shelf than it cost to put the wheat in it. - Now let's get our facts straight . . . that's what I'm talking about here. Today, the farmer gets about 42 cents of the consumer's food dollar. We've been chasing that 42-cent rabbit long enough. I'm getting tired of it. I want to start chasing that 58-cent rabbit. That's where the pay-dirt is. That's where the feather-bedding is. That's where the heavy labor costs are. And most of that 58 cents is labor, and I want labor well-paid, but I'd like to have them to work on the job, instead of all these curtailments we put into it. When George Meany stopped loading wheat down at the Gulf ports last summer under the guise of protecting the cost of living in America, I shuddered.

"To have George Meany to be the protector of the cost of living for consumers - it's like sending the fox out to guard the chicken coop. All they want is a bigger rip-off from the treasury for the longshoremen to get paid for not working, and they got it, and we write that into the cost, somehow or other along the process, you see.

"American agriculture has got a record of increased output per worker and increased efficiency the last 20 years that is absolutely unequalled by any other major sector of the economy. It's a tremendous record. It makes us the world's most efficient producers. Therefore the world's best source of supply for these \$22-billion worth of stuff we export. We're always going to be that way because you farmers in this room haven't learned yet to punch the clock at 40 hours. You haven't learned yet to go out to the stable and say 'Look, Bossie, I'm going to shut you off, I'm going to be gone for three days.' But most important of all, you haven't learned yet to put two drivers in a tractor cab like that Penn Central locomotive that goes through this town - if it's still going. And because they've had two drivers in the cab, and everything else they didn't need, they're in trouble. But not so our American farmers. They're still profit motivated. They're working for themselves.

"I think the world's number one problem in the generation ahead - the world's number one challenge - is: Are we going to be able to increase food production in the world fast enough to keep pace with this still exploding population. At some point you've got to bring the population under control.

"I've seen hungry men on the other side of the Earth, I've seen starving men. No use talking to them about democracy; no use talking about human freedom or human dignity, or human liberty. They listen only to the person who has a piece of bread. That's a powerful language.

"That's the language that the United States is prepared to speak powerfully and eloquently. We're just learning how to speak it. It's a new role for us . . . we're awkward in the way we use it. But we are learning how to speak it - the power is here, the tool is here, it's here because this tremendous American agribusiness complex that I see represented here in this room this morning. Working for ourselves - our own capital - our own labor - our families pitching in with them - trying to make a little money. There's no system in the world that has ever beat it. No system ever will beat it. It's up to us

to make sure that we preserve that kind of system, that kind of philosophy, in this country - and if we do, I am sure that the third century of American history will be even more glorious than it has been in the latter years of the second century.

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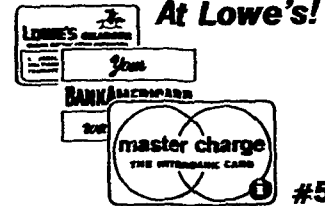
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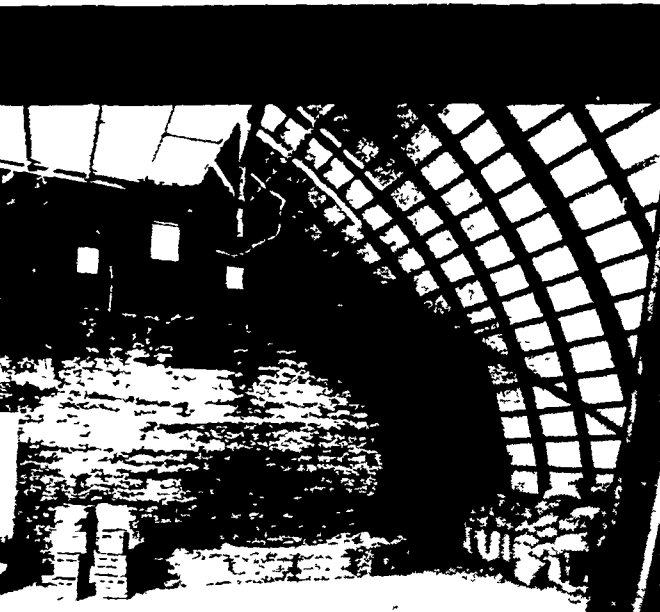
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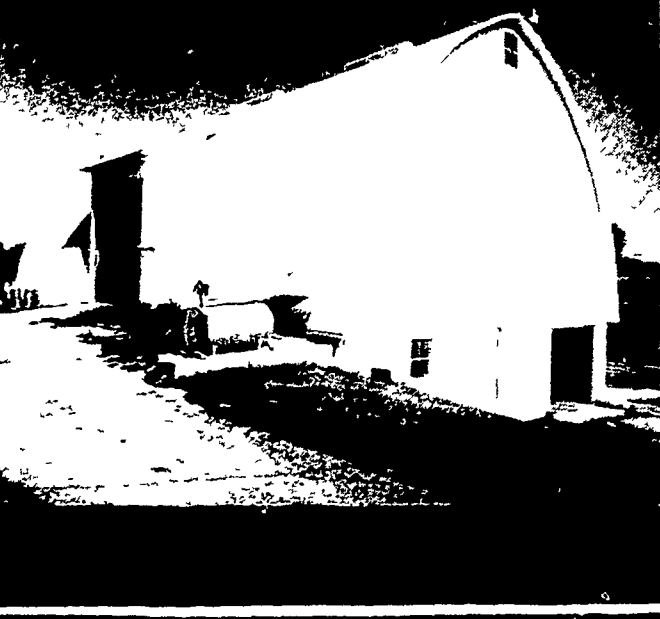


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