

AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS

By Senator Owen Brewster

As the country slowly emerges from the Herculean effort in production incident to the Second World War and while the shadow of a possible Third World War looms on the eastern horizon, it is necessary to make our plans for the days ahead.

Let me make clear first that it seems wise to take into account the possibility at least that we shall have a period of comparative peace. This is an almost startling statement in the face of the events which are being emphasized in the news but it is necessary to realize that 200,000 peaceful households in Maine occupy no space in the public press but one discord of dish pans and rolling pins immediately wins a headline.

This is certainly a time to be alert and America has learned in the events leading up to two world wide wars how inevitably America is now a part of world events.

Twice now delirious dictators have sought to dominate the world and have learned too late that the United States of America was a decisive factor in their defeat. America may well be attacked first rather than last if another catastrophe for civilization should threaten. This means we must be adequately prepared.

However, adequate preparation in modern war means primarily economic strength. The virility and productive capacity of America under

free enterprise has been the cornerstone upon which has been reared the structure of victories in two world wars.

With more and more of the burden of preserving modern civilization resting upon our shoulders it is ever more incumbent upon us to insure the vital elements of our strength.

Jet planes and atom bombs and strategic bombers with adequate air bases are essential for defense in modern war as Maine knows full well from the activities of Bangor, Limestone, and Presque Isle.

In the old days it was wisely said that armies marched upon their stomachs. All great commanders have been more anxious about the commissary than the ammunition.

Today it is equally true that armies fly upon their stomachs. Food still wins wars and furnishes the best guarantee of the peace -- as is being demonstrated on a thousand fronts around the world.

Revolution and communism breed in hungry bodies. With the involved economy of the modern world the farmer is more than ever the foundation of security and peace.

Restoration or maintenance of a healthy and thriving agricultural life is still the backbone of the nation.

We have the lessons of the collapse of agriculture following the First World War as a guide to the pitfalls to be avoided. The guarantee of support prices for a period of two years following the Second World War was developed from this sad experience.

To keep agricultural production and demand somewhere near in reasonable balance is still the challenge and a program is being carefully studied and developed looking to this end.

With twenty-five years of experience in the attempt to develop that degree of coordination between millions of farmers and tens of millions of consumers it should be possible to do a far better job than was done in the uncertain era following the convulsion of the First World War.

A system of checks and balances which shall supply needed food for a hungry world without inundating the Treasury of the United States with an unneeded and devastating surplus of food products is obviously required.

Curiously enough the farm adjustment programs of the decade preceding the Second World War have taken as their yardstick the relation between agricultural and industrial prices during the period from 1909 and 1913 when William Howard Taft was President of the United States.

The value of the dollar was very different in that period but the net result as far as agriculture and industry were concerned has been considered by all the planners of recent years as the most nearly ideal in our history.

Surely this generation with all the experience of the past forty years as our guide is capable of restoring in substantial measure that happy relationship between agriculture and industry from which we plunged into this era of worldwide wars.