

REMARKS

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The program for this conference shows that you are continuing to struggle with those national and world problems which make public affairs education more important today than ever before. The extremely rapid changes which have been occurring in agriculture, and which are well known to all of us here, make adjustment a vital concern of people and, therefore, of educators. Some of the necessary adjustments are being made every day by individual farmers as they make their farm management decisions. The more adjustments they make the more likely they are to be in business next year and in the following years.

More and more, however, the problems of adjustment are becoming the concern of society. Adjustments needed to improve low incomes of farmers are but one facet of a vast and dynamic complex of adjustments. The farm adjustment problem comes to the forefront and is somewhat more embroiled in politics. Society has problems of adjusting to new demands for tax revenue or more wisely spending current tax revenues, or the problems of what to do about zoning or schools or foreign trade. Other problems we well know also confront society, but none claim the limelight of the political arena with the same glitter as the farm adjustment problems.

In all these areas society is constantly making decisions. We, who are society, must be informed. We must be given a chance to study all sides of controversial issues. We must be able to do it in an unbiased atmosphere. We must be taught the importance of the democratic process. We must become interested in public affairs because we are the public and in addition hold a public trust for helping the public to help itself.

On those who are given the job of helping shed light on these various public issues, lies a great responsibility. It is much different from showing a farmer how 400 pounds of fertilizer per acre will help him, or organizing a youth club, or increasing production of milk per cow, although these are all important and need to be part of our programs, too. Our public affairs program in Ohio has been well received. Lately we have been putting more emphasis on the workshop approach where five or more meetings are held on one subject. Leaders come together to give intensive

study to these subjects. We feel it gives more depth to our extension teaching program. However, this is only one approach.

Those who have the responsibility of teaching in the area of public problems are dealing with economic roadblocks, passions, biases, and feelings which do not play so important a role in other areas. The greatest care and finesse and complete dedication to the use of proper teaching methods are required to avoid doing educational efforts more harm than good in this area. Despite the danger signals surrounding public policy we in extension must accept the challenge!

Rapid change is a characteristic in today's world. Problems differ—new ideas are born—progress is made—so we in extension must also change, nurture new ideas, make progress, and mature. We are doing this, I believe, in the area of public affairs.

Gradually we have seen a growth in emphasis on public affairs during the last ten years. Some of you probably come from a farm management background, some from marketing, some from another area; slowly but surely, however, we are seeing more of both staff and facilities devoted to the specific area of public affairs. Our National Scope Committee recognized its importance. Many of our state committees also have recognized its importance.

Here we commend the efforts of the Farm Foundation in helping to develop competent personnel in the embryonic stage of the work. Now the Foundation is teamed with the Adjustment Center in further developing the area.

We have specialists working specifically on public affairs education. As the world becomes smaller and as we live closer together, work in public affairs will become even more crucial. We will likely have more public affairs specialists in the years ahead. Extension will continually re-evaluate its programs. In this re-evaluation we will endeavor to see that people skilled in teaching the facts underlying public issues will become more competent.

As I see it, this conference is devoted to increasing both teaching skills and subject matter acumen. Your program shows much forethought. All who have played a prominent role in the development of these conferences are to be congratulated. The Farm Foundation, the land-grant colleges and state universities of this nation, as well as leaders in related areas, have joined hands in a most effective manner to develop, expand, and improve educational and research programs of far-reaching value to the American people.