

STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) ON INTRODUCING A BILL TO FIX THE PRICE SUPPORT LEVEL ON BASIC FARM COMMODITIES AT 90 PERCENT OF PARITY, FEBRUARY 11, 1957.

MR. PRESIDENT, I send to the desk for appropriate reference a bill to provide that price supports on the basic farm commodities shall be fixed at 90 percent of parity.

In the 84th Congress I introduced a bill to accomplish the same purpose. Unfortunately for the farmers, the omnibus farm bill which contained a one-year provision for 90 percent of parity support levels was vetoed by the President and the Congress later enacted the soil bank program without the 90 percent provision.

I am now prompted to introduce my bill again to provide for permanent 90 percent of parity on the basic farm crops because I believe it essential to the welfare of the farmer and to the nation itself.

More than a week ago upon receiving a report that Mr. Benson, the Secretary of Agriculture, was about to announce a reduction in the support level for cotton, I telegraphed him urging that he increase the support level instead of reducing it. I send a copy of that telegram to the desk and ask that it be printed in the Record at this point in my remarks.

This past Saturday when I learned of the Secretary's action in reducing support levels, I telegraphed him again with specific reference to cotton urging that he reconsider the reduction from 82½ percent to 77 percent of parity. I request that a copy of this telegram be included in the Record at this point.

Mr. President, many groups in this country have received guaranteed increases in income during the past year. Those increases have also raised the cost of living generally for most of the people of this country. This increase in the cost of living applies to our farmers as well as to those who have received increased incomes. But our farmers have not received any increase in income. They have been the victims of a decreased income. Not only that, they now have been subjected to a lesser guarantee of the prices on the basic farm commodities.

These commodities are essential to our civilian population and to our defense establishments. In my opinion, fixed price supports are essential, not only to the farmer, but to all of us/because the production of these commodities is vital to the proper functioning of the civilian and military pursuits of this nation.

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