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# Farm Problems Don't Die Easily

THE congressman from Oklahoma rose in the House of Representatives on that particular Friday and declared:

"Mr. Chairman, it is necessary that the products of labor be in proper form to facilitate transportation and exchange. This is necessary to give the product exchangeable value. Supply and demand regulate values when artificial regulations do not interfere with this natural law. This natural law is as immutable as the tides and as resistless as the sun."

He became oratorical as he discussed legislation intended to alleviate the long-standing farm problem because, as he stated it, "The farmers of Oklahoma are not struggling for comforts but for their very existence, for food and clothing, and for a roof over the head of himself and family."

The issue was how to improve prices to farmers without interfering with supply and demand on domestic and world markets.

"No one can say exactly the point where supply begins or ends in relation to the creation of value," the congressman said, "but supply can be adapted to demand and the gulf between the producer and the consumer is not so fixed that it can not be bridged. It can not ever, in my opinion, be filled."

He went on to declare that man-made conditions in the world markets, as well as the domestic trade, are "out of gear with nature and as a result the unfortunate farmers are being ground between the upper stone of high prices for his necessities and the lower stone of low prices for his products."

He charged that "many uneconomic laws and regulations have contributed to this condition." And agriculture wasn't the only industry in trouble. The speaker asserted that the cry, "'Keep the government out of business,' comes rather tardily when for more than 50 years the government has been in the money business and has turned this popular product over to private persons to profit on and take toll of the American people."

The congressman pleaded: "Give (the Oklahoma farmer) a little lift so that he can regain his foothold. There are no more optimistic people on the earth than the farmers of Oklahoma. The floods descend and the drouths come and the boll weevil thrives, yet he goes on from year to year with grit in his craw and hope in his heart."

"I am hoping the day will come

when the farmer will have the benefit of his toil and some reasonable compensation for the labor of himself and his family."

That impassioned speech might have been made this month when Congress was passing HR 4296, raising target prices and loan rates on 1975 crops of cotton, wheat, corn and soybeans, and authorizing a quarterly cost of production adjustment in the farm price support.

But it wasn't. It was made on Friday, May 23, 1924, just 51 years ago, by Hon. Tom D. McKeown of Ada, who represented his district for many years. He was talking about the McNary-Haugen bill. The reprint from the Congressional Record was supplied by his brother, Roy S. McKeown, retired Ada newspaperman.

Agriculture has undergone tremendous changes since 1924, but the more things change, the more the farm problem remains the same.