

Mr. Carter

May 14, 1946

MEMORANDUM TO: THE DIRECTORS OF THE
AVIATION CORPORATION

Our fellow director, Major Benjamin H. Namm, president of the National Retail Dry Goods Association, made a speech over Station WLW - The Nation's Station - in Cincinnati on May 9th.

I had not known that Major Namm was scheduled to speak until his office sent me a transcript of the program, "Everybody's Farm".

I thought you might be interested in seeing it and am therefore enclosing copy herewith.

Victor Emanuel

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REMARKS OF BANJAMIN H. NAMM, PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL RETAIL DRY GOODS ASSOCIATION - - IN A RADIO BROADCAST, "EVERYBODY'S FARM" OVER STATION WLW, CINCINNATI, OHIO, ON THURSDAY, MAY 9th, 1946.

- ANNOUNCER:** Our guest today, Neighbors, is Major Benjamin H. Namm, President of the National Retail Dry Goods Association and a Consultant to the President's Famine Emergency Committee. Just what is your job with this Committee, Major Namm?
- MAJOR NAMM:** My job, Bob, is not to work directly with Farmers but to work with the Retailers of the nation, helping to carry out the President's Food Conservation Program.
- ANNOUNCER:** The way I look at it, we all have a place in the Food Program.... the Program that will save the lives of untold millions of people across the waters. Naturally, here on Everybody's Farm Hour, we spend most of our time talking about producing food. But, actually that's only part of the battle. Isn't that right? You recently returned from a trip to Europe and have seen conditions for yourself.
- MAJOR NAMM:** Yes, Bob. If we are going to put American food in the empty stomachs of the starving people across the seas, and I have seen countless numbers of them starving, it is going to take the combined efforts of every man, woman and child. It will take the all-out production of the American Farmer, sure, but that's only half the battle. Even at best, the sweat and brains of "R.F.D." can only partially meet the crying need for "bread" that echoes out across the oceans. It's the duty of all the rest of us - Mother, Dad, and the kids - to save food at every corner, cook only enough to feed the family, to save what is left over and, by all means, "keep garbage cans empty" - to save that slice of bread (the slice that will save the life of someone who is suffering the torture of starvation). I will even go one step further by saying that lasting world peace can not be achieved except by world cooperation in production and by cutting down waste.
- ANNOUNCER:** Yes, but Major, you haven't mentioned the food retailer, yet, the fellow who processes the food, the man who operates the corner grocery store.
- MAJOR NAMM:** All right, Bob, just give me time. His is the job of saving food all of the way down the line, too. And not only that, he can help the rest of us with the difficult task of making every pound of food do the most good.

ANNOUNCER: Well, it all adds up, then, doesn't it, Major? We're all in the same boat!

MAJOR NAMM: It does, Bob, and that's the way it always has been and always will be here in America. Some of us are inclined to go down our OWN narrow road and forget all about the broad highway that means prosperity for EVERYONE.

ANNOUNCER: I am afraid that I don't follow you on that one, Major.

MAJOR NAMM: The way I see it, Bob, what's good for the farmer is also good for the rest of us. And likewise, what's beneficial for labor and industry - for the retailer and the consumer - is also good for the farmer. Following the narrow selfish road can only lead to economic disaster. There is just one United States, and there is just one National Economy. No single faction can prosper at the expense of another. When Europe, Asia, and Africa lie in the throes of a dreadful famine, then our nation also suffers.

ANNOUNCER: Then, in other words, if the world would recover, we must all recover together.

MAJOR NAMM: Exactly, Bob! During the war labor, industry, and agriculture joined together to produce the food, weapons and supplies needed by our armed forces. The merchant marine and the Navy built a bridge of ships from our shores to the far-flung battle fronts. This bridge was used to get American goods over to our fighting men. So today the nation again has to put her shoulder to the wheel, and all of us must pitch in and help pump food through the lifeline of humanity to the people who will live or die, depending upon our efforts.

ANNOUNCER: I liked your point, Major, about the importance of "pitching together" here on the home front for the good of everyone, but it seems to me that sometimes we do exactly the opposite. Now you take the issue of OPA and subsidies for instance. Several groups want to keep both of these programs. Others want to toss them out. How do you expect harmony with this kind of a set up?

MAJOR NAMM: Well, Bob, that's democracy, and thank God we here can still exercise the privilege of disagreeing. Actually, I think that there's considerably more agreement than we realize. Just a week or so ago, representatives of the three major farm organizations -the Farm Bureau, Grange and the Farmers' Union -testified before the Senate Banking Committee that they were in favor of keeping the OPA. That is, provided that some of their arbitrary policies were clipped.

ANNOUNCER: What do they mean by the term "Clipped", Major?

MAJOR NAMM: They asked for a gradual de-control of prices in order to encourage full production. And, Bob, when you get right down to it "all-out" production is the most potent weapon we can muster against inflation. Likewise, when you read the record you find that progressive labor leaders - representatives of industry and trade - consumer groups, all took a similar stand. They asked for the same changes that agriculture was suggesting. What we all want is production and more production. At the present time the Office of Price Administration has barriers across this road. If we can remove these barriers, and still keep price control, we're headed out of the darkness of our postwar ills.

ANNOUNCER: What is the stand of your National Retail Dry Goods Association on these issues?

MAJOR NAMM: When you compare our NRDGA resolutions with those of the farm organizations you'll find that we see almost eye to eye. It still comes back to the fact that we want price controls until such time as they can be safely abandoned. We don't want runaway inflation, and neither does the farmer. But if we can speed up the wheels of American industry to the tempo of "all-out production", then we can saw off this threatened price spiral at its very base. Plentiful supplies always mean lower prices. It'll probably take a little while for our industrial machine to gain momentum, but when that time comes, then there will be no further need for OPA. Most retailers also agree with the Farm Bureau and the Grange on the "touchy" subject of farm subsidies. We strongly are in sympathy with the farm organizations' contention that the consumer is better able to pay moderately higher prices for food than is the taxpayer to pay farm subsidies.

ANNOUNCER: Well, Major Namm, I believe that we would all like to see fair price tags on our goods, and sound merchandise on our shelves. But getting back to the food picture, is it true that the retailers of America are going to take an active part in the conservation program?

MAJOR NAMM: Yes, Bob, we have formed a Retailers' Advisory Committee. It is headed by C. B. Dulcan of Washington, D. C. This Committee will work with Mr. Chester Davis and his over-all Famine Emergency Committee and its principal activity will be to secure individual signatures to its "American Housewife's Pledge".

ANNOUNCER: What do you mean --- "American Housewife's Pledge"?

MAJOR NAMM: Every housewife in the nation is going to be given an opportunity to sign a food conservation pledge. In this she will promise to conserve vital foods such as wheat, corn, rice, fats and oils. To do everything she possibly can to reduce waste in essential famine-fighting foods. Actually, to replace them in her familys' diet with those that are plentiful. And so we find that farmers, retailers, and consumers generally will be teamed up in an overall, practical program as to reduce world misery. And I needn't tell the men of the soil what an American housewife can do once she sets her mind to something. She'll save that "slice of bread" that we spoke about a while ago. And, knowing women, my guess is that they won't stop at that!

ANNOUNCER: I doubt, however, Major, that any man ever really understood a woman. But I'll take your word for it, and furthermore, I think your'e right. Incidentally, when will this consumer pledge program be announced?

MAJOR NAMM: It will be announced in the near future. So please don't write in about it just yet. And as a final thought, Bob, it was Ex-Secretary of Agriculture, Claude Wickard, who said "Food will win the war and write the peace". And now that the war has been won at such a tragic cost, let's all make sure that when the final peace is written, it will be spelled out in a right and lasting way.

ANNOUNCER: Major, I'm sure that we all feel the same way about that. And I'd like to say thanks a heap for traveling here to Cincinnati to visit with the listeners of "Everybody's Farm Hour". Folks, you've just heard Major Benjamin H. Namm, President of the National Retail Dry Goods Association, a Consultant to the President's Famine Emergency Committee.

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