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Press Release - Muskie Sights Plight of Maine Farmers During Lockheed Debate

Edmund S. Muskie

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FOR RELEASE

Farm

IMMEDIATELY
Friday, July 30, 1971

MUSKIE SIGHTS PLIGHT OF MAINE FARMERS DURING LOCKHEED DEBATE

Sighting the economic hardships faced by Aroostook County farmers, Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) yesterday (Thursday) voted to amend a bill to provide emergency aid to Lockheed Aircraft Corporation so that funds would also be provided for farmers and small businessmen.

During the debate on the floor of the Senate, Muskie said, "If we are going to use the power of the federal government to mitigate the economic consequences of the business difficulties of large corporations, I feel we should do the same for small businesses of farmers."

"Although the economic consequences of failure of these small enterprises are not as great nationally or regionally as the failure of a company as large as Lockheed, their impact upon the individual employees or owners and upon the town or city in which they are located can be just as great."

Referring to a story in the New York Times (July 29, 1971) about the effects of potato farm failures in Aroostook County, Muskie said the article "clearly shows that the effect upon farmers, their families and the towns of northern Maine is just as severe as the effect of a failure of Lockheed would be upon families and communities in southern California or Georgia. That is why Ralph Smith, a potato farmer in Presque Isle gave up farming after 32 years asks:

'Wouldn't it be better if they let me keep my equipment and keep farming—at least if I could feed my family. It seems if the government can vote money to help Lockheed, if they can bail out Penn Central Railroad, they could let me go on farming.'

Senator Muskie then requested that the full text of the article be reprinted in the Congressional Record.

The amendment, one of several considered during the current debate on the Lockheed loan, was defeated.