

South Dakota's
U.S. Senator

McGovern

“A New
Prairie
Statesman”





McGOVERN OF SOUTH DAKOTA

A NEW PRAIRIE

George McGovern represents the people of his farming state but his interests embrace scores of national problems

"Food, farmers and his fellow man" was the way the NEW YORK TIMES once described the major concerns of United States Senator George McGovern of South Dakota.

The young, first-term, Prairie State Senator gave weight to that description in April of this year. It was he who responded speedily to revelations of hunger and starvation in the United States by enlisting 40 of his colleagues from both parties to join in a Senate Resolution aimed at sweeping away legislative and administrative barriers to a domestic War Against Want which will assure the basic necessities of life and health to every American.

There have been other characterizations of McGovern—for very few Senators, first timers or veterans, present a more challenging array of sometimes puzzling attributes and accomplishments.

Columnist Joseph Alsop, in his new book *The Center, People and Power in Washington*, puts freshman McGovern on his top "very able" list of United States Senators.

From the conservative side of the American political spectrum, a Washington newsletter refers to him as "... as close to a statesman of Agriculture as anyone on the scene."

From the liberal side, historian Arthur M. Schlesinger writes in the NEW REPUBLIC that "There is no more conscientious and thoughtful member of the United States Senate than George McGovern. He is the nearest thing we have to a George Norris in this era ... he is, in addition, a gifted historian."

Back on the conservative side, when the *Who's Who*

publishers, the A. N. Marquis Co., awarded Senator McGovern their Third Biennial Citation for outstanding contribution to government, they referred to him as a man who had shown in the Senate that he "thinks deeply, feels deeply and moves courageously. . . ."

The Senator mixed up the normal patterns in other ways than the array of those who praise him.

- He is a Democrat from a heavily Republican state.

- He is a Vietnam "dove" with a World War II Distinguished Flying Cross—which he won when he brought his flak-crippled B-24 bomber safely down on a tiny landing strip on a Mediterranean island after a bombing mission over Germany.

"I would gladly go again tomorrow if a Hitler threatened our society," he tells his friends.

- He is a persistent battler for higher farm prices, but he has a national following among consumers.

His protests against the multiplication of small farm price increases into large consumer price increases has won both farmer and consumer support for his suggestion that all food packages contain two prices: the price the farmer got for the contents and the price the consumer must pay (i.e., Bread: Farmer, 3 cents; Consumer, 22.2 cents).

- He is a Senator from a state without serious civil rights problems, but it was he who showed the Senate a way for a simple majority to end a filibuster regardless of Rule 22, if they really wanted to do so. It is a simple parliamentary formula for setting a precise time to vote on an issue by having a majority of Senators vote a motion "in order" to set a time to vote.

Not since Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin crisscrossed the nation regularly on speaking tours and filled magazines and press with articles on his cause, while achieving later recognition as one of the five most effective United States Senators in history, has the Senate had such a "triple-threat man"—an in-

STATESMAN





Senator McGovern chats with a South Dakota wheat farmer. McGovern represents his people back home, but he speaks out for all America.

dustrious author-lecturer-legislator—as the young man from the Dakota plains.

McGovern has published two books since becoming a Senator and has a third on the way. *War Against Want* was the story of his observation and experiences with starving people throughout the world as the first U. S. Food for Peace director under President John F. Kennedy.

The book concluded with a 10-point plan to end world food shortages. The plan, embodied in his International Food and Nutrition Act of 1965, is credited with clearing the way for shifting our Food for Peace program from a farm surplus disposal scheme to a positive, production-for-need program. There were those who wanted to end the program when farm surpluses were gone.

McGovern's second book, *Agricultural Thought In The Twentieth Century*, is an historical anthology of U.S. farm programs rated as a "must" for farm policy followers by Kenneth Galbraith, Gilbert Fite, the Kiplinger Letter and many others.

His magazine articles have appeared in *Look*, *ATLANTIC*, and other major publications in which he has presented his "causes," including the world food and population crisis, farm problems, and his long term dissenting view on our involvement in Vietnam.

He was one of the earliest dissenters on escalation of America's role in what he regards as essentially a domestic affair of the Vietnamese people. His Senate speech, of April 25, 1967, "The Lessons of Vietnam," has been described by the *Miami News* and other leading papers as the best over-all analysis of the Vietnam issue.

Audiences from Boston to San Francisco have heard the South Dakota legislator espouse his views from

the platform, and on nation radio and television circuits. A former history and political science professor who coached the debate squad as an extra-curricular activity, McGovern has had the opportunities, the zeal and the talent to evangelize audiences of every kind.

Senator McGovern is a minister's son, born at Avon, S. Dak., educated in South Dakota public schools and Dakota Wesleyan University in his home town of Mitchell. He got his M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Northwestern University after World War II and went back to his native state to teach. He soon became the minority Democratic party's executive secretary, then a U.S. Congressman (1957-1960), Food for Peace Director (1961-62) and Senator (1963-68).

The biggest business in McGovern's home state is agriculture. His prominence in farm program legislative affairs, his advocacy of winning peace in the world with food instead of guns, his efforts to show farmers and consumers that they have a common interest in fair prices and national economic health are consequently major interests of his home state constituency as well as the nation.

The McGovern interest in mankind reaches to the preservation of as much as possible of our natural environment.

In line with his resources concern, McGovern has advanced the development of South Dakota's famed Black Hills, he has proposed that a national recreation area be established around the million acres of pure water reservoirs in the Middle Missouri river area, and the protection of hundreds of small natural lakes and potholes in the upper Midwest for their optimum recreational values.

The opportunities involved include every sort of recreational activity from big game and migratory wildfowl hunting, fishing, hiking, boating and swimming to motoring through Western scenic and historic country.

The escalating war against domestic hunger and want, liberal support for education, improved social security, medical care, urban renewal, civil rights—the whole spectrum of progressive social legislation—are all parts of a program to better the lot of his fellow men with the South Dakotan.

McGovern's genius is his varied talent—to legislate, to write, to speak, to communicate with all colleagues around him, with his home state constituents, and with the nation's millions—about the wisdom of building peace through attention to human welfare.

In the process, he has reached through the label curtains—Democrat, Republican, conservative, liberal—to persuade men of many callings and political and social faiths that the well-being of all men is a common cause in which each man is involved.