

## FARMERS AND THE NATIONAL DEFENSE TRUCK INVENTORY

Radio interview by Thomas H. MacDonald, Commissioner, Public Roads Administration, Federal Works Agency, and Wallace L. Kadderly, Chief, Radio Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, broadcast during the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Friday, September 26, 1941, by the National Broadcasting Company and associated blue-network stations.

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KADDERLY:

We have as a guest today a man who served in the U. S. Department of Agriculture for 20 years as Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads -- Mr. Thomas H. MacDonald.

About two years ago, the Bureau was transferred to the big new Federal Works Agency and its name changed to the Public Roads Administration. Mr. MacDonald was given the new title, "Commissioner of Public Roads," and continues to direct the Federal-aid highway program.

Mr. MacDonald, we're very glad to have you on the National Farm and Home Hour once more.

MACDONALD:

I'm glad to be talking to a farm audience again, Mr. Kadderly.

KADDERLY:

You had something to say to farmers. So we thought -----

MACDONALD:

-----and I know of no better place to say it than on the Farm and Home Hour.

The War Department and the National Defense Advisory Commission have asked us to make an inventory of trucks and busses for national defense. They want to set up detailed central and regional registers of all trucks, busses, and freight trailers in the country similar to the records available on railroads, water shipping and aviation. The inventory will be made by mail. The State Motor Vehicle Registration Agency will be headquarters for the inventory in each State.

The Public Roads Administration of the Federal Works Agency has planned and will supervise the inventory. The WPA, another unit of the Federal Works Agency, will provide clerical assistance in nearly all of the States and then will analyze returns and list the vehicles.

KADDERLY:

And you want farmers to cooperate in this inventory because they own such a large proportion of the trucks in the country.

MACDONALD:

Yes, we certainly do want farmers to cooperate ..... the million or more trucks on farms are about a fourth of all the trucks in the country! Think of the tonnage of defense materials and essential civilian supplies these trucks could move when they were not needed for farm work.

KADDERLY:

They certainly could be a big help. Just HOW do you want farmers to cooperate?

MACDONALD:

What we want them to do is very simple. Each farmer who owns a truck will receive an inventory card—just a small card—to fill out.

All he has to do is to answer a few questions about the make of his truck, its capacity, kind of body (whether stake body, rack, pick-up or other kind), the season of the year the truck is most urgently needed on the farm, whether in an emergency he would be willing to hire or lease it to a Government agency.

After the farmer fills out the card, the next thing for him to do is to return it immediately in the postage free, self-addressed envelope. The information will be confidential.

KADDERLY:

Well, that sounds easy enough.

MACDONALD:

It is easy. And it will take not more than 10 minutes of his time to do it.

KADDERLY:

I know you have a convincing reason why it's necessary for a farmer to fill out one of these inventory cards.

MACDONALD:

Yes..... and it's a double-barreled reason.

KADDERLY:

All right, fire the first barrel.

MACDONALD:

We want every farmer who owns a truck to fill out one of the inventory cards, because the information is needed in planning the transportation requirements of the national defense program: We must keep materials flowing to defense industries. We must keep military and civilian supplies moving to their destinations. We must keep docks and rail terminals free from congestion

Trucks are already doing a big job. We must plan for still greater efficiency in truck transportation. The defense program must not bog down for lack of transportation facilities, no matter what emergency may come.

KADDERLY:

The first reason for farmers and other truck owners to cooperate in the truck inventory, then, is that their help is needed in planning more efficient use of trucks in the national defense program.

Now before you fire your second barrel, one question: You say "trucks are already doing a big job" --- how big?

MACDONALD:

Well, let's compare them with the railroads, on the basis of the total tonnage of freight and the distances it is moved. On that basis, trucks now haul about a sixth as much freight as the railroads.

KADDERLY:

It's amazing how truck transportation has grown in the last few years.

All right, fire your second barrel, Mr. MacDonald -- reason No. 2 for farmers who own trucks to cooperate in this inventory.

MACDONALD:

The second reason is demonstrated in this story from England.

When the present war began, England slowed down the production of trucks and truck parts. She thought she had to produce war materials in truck factories.

By the end of the first year of the war, transportation was in a snarl. England had to organize all available trucks into a "truck pool".

All of this was voluntary. The Government hired the trucks and their drivers and paid the owners on a tonnage basis, at a rate equal to the earnings of the truck in a normal year before the war.

England did in the midst of war the thing we're trying to do now so that we can be prepared before any more serious emergency strikes. We, too, want to plan a "truck pool," but we want to do it now so that we'll be ready for any emergency.

KADDERLY:

Then this is the second reason for truck owners to cooperate in the inventory -- to help plan for greater efficiency in truck transportation NOW, before any emergency strikes.

MACDONALD:

Mr. Kadderly, there is even a very good third reason for farmers and others to cooperate in the inventory. The Government needs the information on trucks and busses in planning for the defense of this country. Therefore, it is the patriotic duty of every truck and bus owner to do his part in supplying this information.

If anyone hesitates because of any fear of loss, I want to assure him that the Government will make full compensation for the services of any vehicle it hires or leases.

KADDERLY:

Well, now, Mr. MacDonald, let me emphasize one or two points for our farm listeners:

If you own a truck you will soon receive an inventory card on which to fill out information about that truck -- its make, capacity, kind of body, its busy season, whether you would be willing to lease or rent it to a Government agency in an emergency.

Fill that card out promptly and return it immediately, postage free.

Mr. MacDonald, will the return address be on the card?

MACDONALD:

Yes, there will be a return envelope with the card. All the truck owner needs to do is to fill out the card, slip it in the envelope, and drop the envelope in the mailbox.

**KADDERLY:**

I'm sure you can depend on our patriotic farmers to cooperate whole-heartedly with you in this national defense inventory of trucks.

Farm and Home Friends, Thomas H. MacDonald, Commissioner of the Public Roads Administration, Federal Works Agency, has explained the national defense truck and bus inventory now under way, and your part in organizing the highway transportation resources of the country for national defense.

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