

FILE

RADIO TALK

Mayor Hubert Humphrey, interviewing Mrs. Henry J. Bessesen, Station WLOL

7:15 P.M., Dec. 4, 1947.

Mayor
Humphrey:

Tonight, Mrs. Bessesen and I are going to briefly present the unique story of CARE. ^{Mayor A.} ~~I~~ was asked about a year ago by York Langton and Mrs. A.N. Satterlee, both of whom had served on the War Emergency Food Committee of our city, if space could be found in our office where orders for CARE packages could be taken. Mrs. Bessesen was asked by them to organize the program, and since that time has been steadily at it, with the result that \$50,000 worth of \$10.00 orders have been taken. National CARE in New York City has grown from a small organization with a few generous and hardy volunteers, scattered throughout the United States, to a mammoth organization with headquarters in 30 major cities, 80 active volunteer committees and over 500 "OUTLETS". Perhaps, some of you listeners do not know just what the letters C.A.R.E. stand for. You'd better tell them, Mrs. Bessesen.

Mrs. Bessesen: That's the popular name, the abbreviation, for the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, Inc. The short name is really the expressive one--CARE--for this is the organization dedicated to serving Americans who care about what happens to the rest of the world.

Twenty-four (now twenty-seven) American welfare agencies formed CARE. Among them were, and still are, representatives of the leading religions, the two major labor organizations, the Cooperative League of the United States, the Y.W.C.A., and most of the organizations for relief in specific countries. They formed CARE to be a channel for their own food help to Europe and made the service available to any individual or organiza-

Humphrey: If I told you then, Mrs. Bessesen, that I had ten perfectly good dollars to be invested in peace, what would you suggest I buy with them?

Bessesen: That's simple--I'd buy a CARE food package. In no other way can you send so much for so little and with so little effort. Today, millions of people in Europe walk a narrow road between life and death,--for many the last mile. For them Time is running out. The CARE food package contains vital supplies that go a long way toward overcoming the deficiencies faced by people in war-tattered countries. They contain 32 pounds of basic foods, totaling 40,963 calories, sufficient to keep a family of four comfortable for a month. In America, the daily diet contains 3,000 calories; the average European is living on a disease-inducing diet, of about 1,500 calories. As one writer expressed it, "Fifteen-hundred calories isn't enough to live on--too much to die on." In Europe, thousands are literally scavenging through refuse cans for food. Listen, Mayor Humphrey, to these typical words of one European recipient of a CARE food package: "When I opened the parcel I had to cry." It's a wonderful feeling, once again to experience this kind of friendship. We in Europe had almost forgotten that human kindness still exists."

Humphrey: As I understand it, you have other than food packages, Mrs. Bessesen?

Bessesen: Yes, Mayor Humphrey. We have three types of packages with materials therein which may be made into clothing,--the woollen, with enough to make a large man's or woman's suit or coat; --the cotton package;--and the blanket package.

Humphrey: I understand the Twin City Lutheran Student Association at the University is buying packages at a great rate.

Bessesen: They certainly are. They have already bought \$230.00 worth of packages, an investment of \$230.00.

Humphrey: Well, just how was that accomplished?

Bessesen: The membership was divided into 34 smaller groups. Various methods have been used, such as working as waiters at banquets in the student Union, selling Christmas cards on commission, shoveling snow, and most important of all, blood donations,-- the last method being by far the largest single factor; and, tomorrow night they are going to have a basket social and donate all the proceeds to CARE. So far, they have sent packages to France, Germany, Austria, and Finland.

Humphrey: Many of our business firms are contributing, too, are they not?

Bessesen: Yes, quite a number of our Minneapolis firms are delivering packages to their affiliates in Europe. In some cases where there is a high percentage of employees having roots in Europe they heads of the firms are making their employees familiar with the fact that the services of CARE at our office are available to them. So, instead of doing their own shopping for package contents, wrapping them, standing in line at the post-office, paying for mailing, they now send us their name and address, the name of the person to whom they wish the package sent, and a check or money order made out to CARE-- we do the rest.

Humphrey: Is it true that CARE is a non-profit organization?

Bessesen: That is, indeed, true. We know and you know, that each package, worth \$10.00 at retail, costs appreciably less when bought by CARE, on a competitive market, in such vast quantities. This margin is the money which finances the operation and the educational activities of CARE.

CARE does not attempt to imply that its non-profit package

Humphrey: As I understand it, then, CARE is only the first step, the immediate step that must be taken, while Government and inter-Governmental agencies work out plans that will result in effective rehabilitation. The people in Europe cannot wait until rehabilitation plans materialize;-while Governments plan, the people must be fed. Without immediate food now, literally hundreds of thousands will perish. I understand that there are an estimated thirty-million hungry children in Europe today!

Bessesen: Which reminds me of a story. Behind each package sold is a story. On last Thanksgiving Day, at one of the family dinners, thanks was offered by the head of the family to Almighty God for the blessings of that family, and a prayer added for the little children in the war-torn countries. Two hours later, little Sylvia Dieterich, five years of age, evidently impressed, came into the living-room where members of the family were gathered, and emptied her the contents of her piggy-bank on the floor. To the less than one dollar therein the adults added their contribution, with the result that the grandfather brought into our office \$12.25 which was donated in the name of Sylvia.

Humphrey: You were telling me the other day that one Minneapolis family instead of buying expensive Christmas gifts is sending out 500 cards about December 10th, early enough to ride the wave of the Christmas spirit, inviting their friends to share with care. Why don't you give the verse used on those cards so that others may wish to do likewise?

Bessesen: Oh, I'd like to--here goes.!

"No cards or fancy gifts this year,
Just a plain old-fashioned greeting,
There are hungry people, all too near,
Several million are not eating.
So, what we're saving on this plan
We're sending over there.
Will you, too, please, do what you can?
We dare, you share, with CARE".

Humphrey : That is certainly a challenge which should not go unheeded. Like this family, the approach of the Christmas season has turned the thoughts of many to Europe's need for help in the face of what is certain to be a winter of extreme hardship. Paul Comly French, Executive Director of Care, made a survey of Care's Missions, during a trip to Europe last summer. His impressions are frightening. He says he saw three to four families huddled together in one small undamaged part of a cellar,-- living there, in the damp, in the dark, without light, heat, or enough clothing to cover their bodies. People, with nowhere else to go, live like animals in any little ^{hole that} ~~hole that~~ provides some shelter. He says officials told him that it will take anywhere from ten to thirty-five years just to clear away the rubble---- not to rebuild cities, mind you--- just to clear away the rubble. Mrs Bessesen, will packages or-

dered now reach the people in time for Christmas?

BESSESEN:

Care is bending every effort toward that goal but it is not promising. Though our European friends turn eyes, hopeless with hunger, toward our shores, we know that hunger has no season, whether it be Christmas or otherwise. With orders pouring into the New York office at the rate of 250,000 per month and into this office at the rate of \$2,500 worth of packages last week, to promise that, with the short time remaining, would not be keeping faith with the public. The thing to remember is that human beings can stand a lot of punishment, but not forever, that of babies, born in Poland, 70% of them die before they reach one year of age. Without immediate help now, hundreds of thousands of people in Europe will perish.

HUMPHREY:

Well, it certainly looks as though we are still fighting a war. We hope the military phase is over but if we want first, to relieve human suffering, and, in so doing, perhaps save the world for democracy, we must do it with the things people need - - - - food, clothing, fuel.

BESSESEN:

So true, and, though we are happy that we have been privileged to handle \$50,000 worth of orders for CARE packages in your office, reports to the public such as that stop being a statistical matter for us and become the life of a baby in Vienna, the warmth of a war widow's children and the health of an aging father.

HUMPHREY:

I know you could tell us many human interest stories if we had the time, but we must not stop until you tell our listeners just what they can do to help.

BESSESEN:

It's really so simple. Send us your name and address as the giver of a package. If you wish it to go to a definite person, give us his name and address, printed plainly and fully. Then, attach your check or money order made out to

"C.A.R.E." for ten dollars for each package ordered. If you know no one to whom to send a package, we include it in General European Relief. The New York office has lists of bona fide names in each of the 14 countries of Europe with which it has contracts. Mail your order to C.A.R.E. COMMITTEE, MAYOR'S OFFICE, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA. We do the rest. If you wish further information call us by telephone, - MAIN 5398 -- MAIN 5398. THANK YOU.

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