

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

"Commodities and the School Lunch Program"

American School Food Service Association

Rosslyn Ramada Inn, Arlington, Virginia

March 6, 1974

It always is a pleasure to meet with the American School Food Service Association. We are old friends and allies. And now it looks as if our alliance will have to go on the offensive in another tough fight.

Your organization long has had as one of its major goals a universal program of balanced, nutritious meals for youngsters in every school in this nation. Your theme this week is, "Universality: The Possible Dream."

Well, as you no doubt are painfully aware, the Nixon Administration has other ideas. It would like to make your dream IM-possible.

We have seen evidence in recent weeks that the Administration is embarked on a course that would lead to the eventual dismantlement of the school lunch program as we now know it. Rather than becoming a universal program, it would be squeezed and narrowed in scope to become a welfare program. The average American, whose children now benefit by the millions from the good, nourishing meals you place before them, would be cut off from further participation.

I want you to know that I will do everything I can in the Senate to see that this Administration policy trend is reversed.

In fact, I am pleased to announce that I am introducing in the Senate the "Child Nutrition Act of 1974," embodying the principles of universality. I hope that the Senate will move quickly to consider this bill, which would achieve goals that you and I have sought for many years.

The school lunch programs mean more than food for the body. They mean food for the brain. Food for thought. Food is as important as books if a child is to learn and grow up fit to compete as an adult, to apply his learning and make a contribution to society -- and to raise healthy, productive children of the future generation.

Today we know more, thanks to science, than ever before about the relationship between food and the mind. As a member of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, I have listened to hours of expert testimony and read through volumes of transcripts on this subject.

Diet clearly affects mental condition, particularly in the young and unborn. What is or is not in the diet of the pregnant mother or the infant strongly affects what that child grows up to be.

And in growing children, both the diet itself and the eating habits learned with the diet further determine the conditions that will prevail in adulthood. In boys, a steady diet of hamburgers and soda pop can set a pattern of poor diet in adult life and such problems as heart disease in middle age.

In girls, the problem is perhaps even more serious. Not only does poor diet produce poor health in the girl and then the woman, but it can mean her children will be born unhealthy. And, even worse, the mother will lack the knowledge and habits necessary to teach the child proper dietary practices.

Thus, the legacy of poor food and poor mental and physical health can be passed from generation to generation in an endless, heartless, hopeless chain, unless someone steps in to break it. That is the important mission of the American School Food Service Association and the mission to which I have committed my full support.

But to accomplish this mission, we will have to reshape the thinking that has prevailed in the present Administration, which has attempted to dismantle programs and systems that have taken years to build and perfect. You know what I am talking about:

-- The Nixon-Butz philosophy that says, "Let's wait until the next grain crop is harvested before we worry about the wheat shortage."

-- Or, that says, "Sure, give them school meals. But have the cook run down to the grocery store to buy the food. We can't be bothered with supplying commodities anymore."

But that isn't the whole story. Even given a program that doesn't include government-supplied commodities, the Administration drags its feet.

For example, the Nutrition Committee has been fighting a running battle with USDA for nearly two years now to implement the WIC supplementary feeding program for women, infants, and children. This program supplies "prescription food" for pregnant and lactating mothers, infants and children -- or is supposed to.

We had to go to court to break an 18-month USDA delay in just writing the rules under which the WIC program would be run. We now have the rules, but they were hastily written and need to be rewritten. Meanwhile, we have delay and unnecessary administrative complications.

Yet there has been such a demand for participation in the WIC program that the government has had to turn down over a hundred agencies that would have operated programs worth \$35 million. And the program still is not operating the way it should be after this much time.

But, you know what has been going on. You were there when in Congress last year we debated the School Lunch Bill. We were able to hold the Administration off and we won a few victories.

We got a guaranteed minimum reimbursement rate for school lunches.

We got an escalator clause that attempts to recognize the impact of Nixonomics on the school lunch program, by increasing reimbursement rates periodically to reflect inflation.

We mandated the continued availability and expansion of the school milk program.

And we raised the income guidelines that determine eligibility for reduced-price lunches.

I was happy to pitch in and offer these amendments and fight for them. We didn't get everything we wanted, but if we hadn't fought, you can be sure the school lunch program would be in a shambles today.

As it is, the cost of inflation has been the loss of many participants in this program -- many of them the youngsters who need the program most. You know the statistics. Some 200,000 students were forced to switch from a paying to a non-paying status because the price of a lunch went as high as 65 cents in some cases. And worse than that, a half-million youngsters were pushed out of the program altogether.

At the same time, the quality of meals suffered. Trying to hold down costs and continue your programs, some of you have shown remarkable ingenuity in the face of your problems.

The figures I was just quoting come from a study done by the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. The same study reported that because the USDA commodity surplus program no longer provides ground beef, you invented the "chicken stick," a batter-dipped cylinder of ground "odds and ends" of the bird. But deserts and seconds have had to be eliminated in many cases, and the size of portions has had to be reduced.

And all this occurred after the Administration fought us tooth and nail last year, opposing our reimbursement increases, opposing our escalator clause, opposing the special milk program, opposing the funds for new kitchen equipment.

If they had won, we might be talking today about the loss of a million or two million youngsters, rather than a half-million, from the school lunch program.

The battle has continued over recent months. The Department of Agriculture has still not published regulations to implement the expanded special free milk program enacted last fall. And unless Congress acts to continue beyond June 30th the increased maximum income guideline -- designed to help children of near-poor families receive reduced-price lunches -- there will be few schools that take advantage of this provision, on the expectation that USDA will allow it to expire.

But the Administration is not through. Here is what is facing us now:

-- A total food program budget of nearly \$6 billion proposed by the Nixon Administration last month, containing a spending increase of about \$1 billion, but an actual program increase that in many important areas, including the school lunch program, amounts to virtually nothing.

-- A school lunch equipment assistance budget that would reduce available funding by nearly 20 percent. The Administration says it plans to spend \$28.1 million during the current fiscal year, and it proposes to reduce this to \$22 million for the next year. Against this, the Nutrition Committee has estimated a need of \$40 million annually, to help schools with outdated equipment replace it and to equip others that rightfully should be getting into the program.

-- And finally, we have the now infamous Yeutter memo which shows the full extent of the Administration's callousness, indifference and insensitivity to the food and nutrition needs of this nation. This proposal calls for the total phaseout of the agricultural commodity purchasing program as a longterm goal, and a general phasedown in the meantime, to get us used to the idea.



All that the school lunch budget does is provide for a shift of some 400,000 students from paying to free-lunch status, without any provision for increased participation. This is planned at a time when you and I know that the program should be growing by leaps and bounds.

There is no program, except perhaps Social Security, that is so excellent an investment for the working, taxpaying American, as the school lunch program. It provides nutritious meals at low cost for his children, while also helping feed others less fortunate and perhaps helping diminish the chance that the children of the poor today will grow up to be the parents of the poor in tomorrow's schools.

But all that the President's fiscal 1975 budget does, while increasing expenditures by one-sixth, is cover the cost of inflation.

This budget tacitly admits that the Administration has been unable to do anything about the soaring cost of food, and does not expect to do anything about it in the coming year, either, through mid-1975.

It is a mystery why there should be such a precipitous scramble to scuttle the commodity program. We have just experienced the first year in memory without surpluses, but there is no guarantee that there won't be surpluses again. If the Nixon Administration has its way, and we do again find ourselves with more agricultural commodities than we can absorb in one year, the American farmer would be without the insurance policy that this country has painfully developed over years and years.

But the new assault on the commodity program carries even more dangerous implications.

If the commodity purchase system were scrapped, we don't know that there would be -- or could be -- an adequate replacement. The Administration claims that the states and school food service personnel could buy just as cheaply as the USDA could on the open market. But the truth is that no one knows what the difference in purchasing power is between the federal government and the local units. If the USDA can buy a hundred-thousand pounds of chicken for \$100,000, for example, who is to say it might not cost you \$150,000 or \$200,000 to buy the same quantity?

Nor has the Administration promised to provide adequate financing to supply you at present levels of quantity and quality if your costs do exceed those under a federal purchasing system. If the Administration were to succeed in its tactics, it could mean either a cutback in the scope of your programs, or a vast increase in your costs, or both. The people who benefit from the school lunch program and the taxpayer would both suffer.

What we must do -- and what I have joined Senator McGovern and others in proposing -- is to adopt a guarantee that you can continue to operate at least at your current levels through a continuation of the present commodity program without reduction, until such time as an acceptable alternative is found. If one is not produced, we then must revitalize the commodity purchase system itself.

Price is not the only argument favoring this approach. If we allow the Administration to precipitously dismantle the commodity program, we lose in numerous other ways:

-- We lose the experts in warehousing and distributing bulk foods, who have made the USDA program function all these years. Suddenly the states would be forced to take over. At present, only one state, Rhode Island, the smallest state, has its own purchasing system. The other 49 would have to build their own systems overnight, and their residents would suffer while the bugs were worked out.

-- We would lose the federal inspection system that has guaranteed you high-quality foods for your programs. This is another area in which ability and funds are lacking at the state level. The USDA has an excellent corps of meat inspectors.

-- The USDA also has a fine system of market analysis to determine the best time to buy canned fruits and vegetables. If the states and localities were forced to do their own buying, they would first have to find the experts to advise them, and then would have to replace the existing federal storage and distribution system. Chances are, you would have to buy for shorter time periods, exposing yourselves to market fluctuations.

And if the commodity program were replaced with cash that was allotted to you at the start of the year, what would you do when the price jumped and you found you hadn't been provided enough cash?

The Yeutter Memo and other indications from USDA have outlined the Administration strategy. The ultimate goal is to scrap the commodity program and push the school lunch and supplemental feeding programs over to the Department of Health, Education and Labor. There are those who argue that this is only logical, since HEW is in the business of feeding people, while Agriculture is supposed to deal with farmers.

That may make sense on somebody's organization chart, but you and I know the realities don't bear the argument out.

If the food assistance programs were moved out of the agricultural area and into HEW, there is a possibility of deep cuts being made in the school lunch and supplemental food program budgets, due to competing priorities in services to people.

Secondly, if HEW became the administrator of the school lunch programs and the related food programs, the next step could be an effort to put some of ~~the~~ these program funds into revenue-sharing. This would be just another scheme to scrap a successful federal program and hand it to the states without any guarantee that they could do as well -- and I don't recall having heard any of the states begging to be given the headaches.

Finally, placing the school lunch program under HEW's administration would automatically lump these programs among the HEW programs for the poor.

Adequate nutrition of the children of lower-income families does remain a primary need to be met in school food programs. But it is an essential beginning point, not a final limitation for these programs. We have abundant statistics that show beyond the shadow of a doubt that poor nutrition in

America has no respect for different income groups, but is widespread even among children of families who could be considered well-off.

And that is precisely why the establishment of a universal child nutrition program is of such vital importance.

There recently was a report by the Public Health Service, which I am sure most of you read about. It found that poor people, and especially poor black people, are most vulnerable to dietary deficiencies. But it also found that iron, for example, is deficient in the diets of 95 percent of all pre-school children and women of child-bearing age. It also found other deficiencies showed up even among the affluent.

A universal school lunch program could help teach our children what constitutes a balanced diet, and could help develop the eating habits that could lead to a better nourished nation in the future.

That, I know, is your dream. I certainly share it, and together we can make it a reality.

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REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

"COMMODITIES AND THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM"

AMERICAN SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE ASSOCIATION

ROSLYN RAMADA INN, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

MARCH 6, 1974

IT ALWAYS IS A PLEASURE TO MEET WITH THE AMERICAN SCHOOL  
FOOD SERVICE ASSOCIATION. WE ARE OLD FRIENDS AND ALLIES. AND  
NOW IT LOOKS AS IF OUR ALLIANCE WILL HAVE TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE  
IN ANOTHER TOUGH FIGHT.

YOUR ORGANIZATION LONG HAS HAD AS ONE OF ITS MAJOR GOALS  
A UNIVERSAL PROGRAM OF BALANCED, NUTRITIOUS MEALS FOR YOUNGSTERS  
IN EVERY SCHOOL IN THIS NATION. YOUR THEME THIS WEEK IS,  
"UNIVERSALITY: THE POSSIBLE DREAM."

WELL, AS YOU NO DOUBT ARE PAINFULLY AWARE, THE NIXON  
ADMINISTRATION HAS OTHER IDEAS. IT WOULD LIKE TO MAKE YOUR DREAM  
IM-POSSIBLE.



WE HAVE SEEN EVIDENCE IN RECENT WEEKS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS EMBARKED ON A COURSE THAT ~~COULD~~ LEAD TO THE EVENTUAL DISMANTLEMENT OF THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM AS WE NOW KNOW IT.

✓ RATHER THAN BECOMING A UNIVERSAL PROGRAM, IT WOULD BE SQUEEZED AND NARROWED IN SCOPE TO BECOME A WELFARE PROGRAM. ✓ THE AVERAGE AMERICAN, WHOSE CHILDREN NOW BENEFIT BY THE MILLIONS FROM THE GOOD, NOURISHING MEALS YOU PLACE BEFORE THEM, WOULD BE CUT OFF FROM FURTHER PARTICIPATION.

✓ I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I WILL DO EVERYTHING I CAN IN THE SENATE TO SEE THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION POLICY TREND IS ~~REVERSED.~~  
*reversed & renewed.*

IN FACT, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT I AM INTRODUCING  
IN THE SENATE THE "CHILD NUTRITION ACT OF 1974," EMBODYING THE  
PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSALITY. I HOPE THAT THE SENATE WILL MOVE  
QUICKLY TO CONSIDER THIS BILL, WHICH WOULD ACHIEVE GOALS THAT  
YOU AND I HAVE SOUGHT FOR MANY YEARS.

THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS MEAN MORE THAN FOOD FOR THE  
BODY. THEY MEAN FOOD FOR THE BRAIN. FOOD FOR THOUGHT. FOOD IS  
AS IMPORTANT AS BOOKS IF A CHILD IS TO LEARN AND GROW UP FIT  
TO COMPETE AS AN ADULT, TO APPLY HIS LEARNING AND MAKE A  
CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY -- AND TO RAISE HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE  
CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE GENERATION.

*Pilot effort in 5 or  
6 States, with national  
council on nutrition  
community  
groups*

L TODAY WE KNOW MORE, THANKS TO SCIENCE, THAN EVER BEFORE  
ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD AND THE MIND. L AS A MEMBER  
OF THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND HUMAN NEEDS,  
I HAVE LISTENED TO ~~THE~~ EXPERT TESTIMONY AND READ THROUGH  
VOLUMES OF TRANSCRIPTS ON THIS SUBJECT.

L DIET CLEARLY AFFECTS MENTAL CONDITION, PARTICULARLY IN  
THE YOUNG AND UNBORN. L WHAT IS OR IS NOT IN THE DIET OF THE  
PREGNANT MOTHER OR THE INFANT STRONGLY AFFECTS WHAT THAT CHILD  
GROWS UP TO BE.

L AND IN GROWING CHILDREN, BOTH THE DIET ITSELF AND THE  
EATING HABITS ~~LEARNED WITH THE DIET~~ *greatly affect* ~~FURTHER DETERMINE~~ THE  
CONDITIONS THAT WILL PREVAIL IN ADULthood.

IN BOYS, A STEADY DIET OF HAMBURGERS AND SODA POP CAN SET A PATTERN OF POOR DIET IN ADULT LIFE AND SUCH PROBLEMS AS HEART DISEASE IN MIDDLE AGE.

IN GIRLS, THE PROBLEM IS PERHAPS EVEN MORE SERIOUS. NOT ONLY DOES POOR DIET PRODUCE POOR HEALTH IN THE GIRL AND THEN THE WOMAN, BUT IT CAN MEAN HER CHILDREN WILL BE BORN UNHEALTHY. AND, EVEN WORSE, THE MOTHER WILL LACK THE KNOWLEDGE AND HABITS NECESSARY TO TEACH THE CHILD PROPER DIETARY PRACTICES.

~~THIS~~ THE LEGACY OF POOR FOOD AND POOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH CAN BE PASSED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION IN AN ENDLESS, HEARTLESS, HOPELESS CHAIN, UNLESS SOMEONE STEPS IN TO BREAK IT.

L THAT IS THE IMPORTANT MISSION OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL FOOD

SERVICE ASSOCIATION AND THE MISSION TO WHICH I HAVE COMMITTED

MY FULL SUPPORT.

L BUT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS MISSION, WE WILL HAVE TO RESHAPE THE  
THINKING THAT HAS PREVAILED IN THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, WHICH  
HAS ATTEMPTED TO DISMANTLE PROGRAMS AND SYSTEMS THAT HAVE TAKEN  
YEARS TO BUILD AND PERFECT. YOU KNOW WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT:

-- THE NIXON-BUTZ PHILOSOPHY THAT SAYS, "LET'S WAIT UNTIL  
THE NEXT GRAIN CROP IS HARVESTED BEFORE WE WORRY ABOUT THE  
WHEAT SHORTAGE."

-- OR, THAT SAYS, "SURE, GIVE THEM SCHOOL MEALS BUT HAVE  
THE COOK RUN DOWN TO THE GROCERY STORE TO BUY THE FOOD. WE  
CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH SUPPLYING COMMODITIES ANYMORE."



BUT THAT ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. EVEN GIVEN A PROGRAM  
THAT DOESN'T INCLUDE GOVERNMENT-SUPPLIED COMMODITIES, THE  
ADMINISTRATION DRAGS ITS FEET.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE NUTRITION COMMITTEE HAS BEEN FIGHTING  
A RUNNING BATTLE WITH USDA FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS NOW TO  
IMPLEMENT THE WIC SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN,  
INFANTS, AND CHILDREN. THIS PROGRAM SUPPLIES "PRESCRIPTION  
FOOD" FOR PREGNANT AND LACTATING MOTHERS, INFANTS AND CHILDREN  
-- OR IS SUPPOSED TO.

WE HAD TO GO TO COURT TO BREAK AN 18-MONTH USDA DELAY  
IN JUST WRITING THE RULES UNDER WHICH THE WIC PROGRAM WOULD  
BE RUN.

L WE NOW HAVE THE RULES, BUT THEY WERE HASTILY WRITTEN

AND NEED TO BE REWRITTEN, MEANWHILE, WE HAVE DELAY AND

UNNECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLICATIONS.

L YET THERE HAS BEEN SUCH A DEMAND FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE

WIC PROGRAM THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS HAD TO TURN DOWN OVER A

HUNDRED AGENCIES THAT WOULD HAVE OPERATED PROGRAMS WORTH \$35

MILLION. AND THE PROGRAM STILL IS NOT OPERATING THE WAY IT

SHOULD BE AFTER THIS MUCH TIME.

L BUT, YOU KNOW WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON, YOU WERE THERE WHEN IN  
CONGRESS LAST YEAR WE DEBATED THE SCHOOL LUNCH BILL, ~~WE WERE~~

~~ABLE TO HOLD THE ADMINISTRATION OFF AND WE WON A FEW VICTORIES.~~

h WE GOT A GUARANTEED MINIMUM REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR SCHOOL  
LUNCHES.

WE GOT AN ESCALATOR CLAUSE THAT ATTEMPTS TO RECOGNIZE THE  
IMPACT OF ~~INFLATION~~ <sup>inflation</sup> ON THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM, BY INCREASING  
REIMBURSEMENT RATES PERIODICALLY TO REFLECT INFLATION.

↳ WE MANDATED THE CONTINUED AVAILABILITY AND EXPANSION OF  
THE SCHOOL MILK PROGRAM.

↳ AND WE RAISED THE INCOME GUIDELINES THAT DETERMINE  
ELIGIBILITY FOR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCHES.

I WAS HAPPY TO PITCH IN AND OFFER THESE AMENDMENTS AND FIGHT  
FOR THEM. WE DIDN'T GET EVERYTHING WE WANTED, BUT IF WE HADN'T  
FOUGHT, YOU CAN BE SURE THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM WOULD BE IN A  
SHAMBLES TODAY.

As it is, the cost of inflation has been the loss of many participants in this program -- many of them the youngsters who need the program most. You know the statistics. Some 200,000 students were forced to switch from a paying to a non-paying status because the price of a lunch went as high as 65 cents in some cases. And worse than that, a half-million youngsters were pushed out of the program altogether.

At the same time, the quality of meals <sup>has</sup> suffered. Trying to hold down costs and continue your programs, some of you have shown remarkable ingenuity in the face of your problems.

The figures I was just quoting come from a study done by the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs.

Beef buy now

THE SAME STUDY REPORTED THAT BECAUSE THE USDA COMMODITY SURPLUS PROGRAM NO LONGER PROVIDES GROUND BEEF, YOU INVENTED THE "CHICKEN STICK," A BATTER-DIPPED CYLINDAR OF GROUND "ODDS AND ENDS" OF THE BIRD. BUT DESERTS AND SECONDS HAVE HAD TO BE ELIMINATED IN MANY CASES, AND THE SIZE OF PORTIONS HAS HAD TO BE REDUCED.

AND ALL THIS OCCURRED AFTER THE ADMINISTRATION FOUGHT US TOOTH AND NAIL LAST YEAR, OPPOSING OUR REIMBURSEMENT INCREASES, OPPOSING OUR ESCALATOR CLAUSE, OPPOSING THE SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM, OPPOSING THE FUNDS FOR NEW KITCHEN EQUIPMENT.

IF THEY HAD WON, WE MIGHT BE TALKING TODAY ABOUT THE LOSS OF A MILLION OR TWO MILLION YOUNGSTERS, RATHER THAN A HALF-MILLION, FROM THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM.



THE BATTLE HAS CONTINUED OVER RECENT MONTHS. THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS STILL NOT PUBLISHED REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE EXPANDED SPECIAL FREE MILK PROGRAM ENACTED LAST FALL, AND UNLESS CONGRESS ACTS TO CONTINUE BEYOND JUNE 30TH THE INCREASED MAXIMUM INCOME GUIDELINE -- DESIGNED TO HELP CHILDREN OF NEAR-POOR FAMILIES RECEIVE REDUCED-PRICE LUNCHES -- THERE WILL BE FEW SCHOOLS THAT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS PROVISION, ON THE EXPECTATION THAT USDA WILL ALLOW IT TO EXPIRE.

↳ BUT THE ADMINISTRATION IS NOT THROUGH. HERE IS WHAT IS FACING US NOW:

-- A TOTAL FOOD PROGRAM BUDGET OF NEARLY \$6 BILLION PROPOSED BY THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION LAST MONTH, CONTAINING A SPENDING INCREASE OF ABOUT \$1 BILLION, BUT AN ACTUAL PROGRAM INCREASE

THAT IN MANY IMPORTANT AREAS, INCLUDING THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM,  
AMOUNTS TO VIRTUALLY NOTHING. *inflation*

-- A SCHOOL LUNCH EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE BUDGET THAT WOULD  
REDUCE AVAILABLE FUNDING BY NEARLY 20 PERCENT. THE ADMINISTRATION  
SAYS IT PLANS TO SPEND \$28.1 MILLION DURING THE CURRENT FISCAL  
YEAR, AND IT PROPOSES TO REDUCE THIS TO \$22 MILLION FOR THE NEXT  
YEAR. *L* AGAINST THIS, THE NUTRITION COMMITTEE HAS ESTIMATED A NEED  
OF \$40 MILLION ANNUALLY, TO HELP SCHOOLS WITH OUTDATED EQUIP-  
MENT REPLACE IT AND TO EQUIP OTHERS THAT RIGHTFULLY SHOULD BE  
GETTING INTO THE PROGRAM.

-- AND FINALLY, WE HAVE THE NOW INFAMOUS YEUTTER MEMO WHICH SHOWS THE FULL EXTENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S CALLOUSNESS, INDIFFERENCE AND INSENSITIVITY TO THE FOOD AND NUTRITION NEEDS OF THIS NATION. THIS PROPOSAL CALLS FOR THE TOTAL PHASEOUT OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY PURCHASING PROGRAM AS A LONGTERM GOAL, AND A GENERAL PHASEDOWN IN THE MEANTIME, TO GET US USED TO THE IDEA.

ALL THAT THE SCHOOL LUNCH BUDGET DOES IS PROVIDE FOR A SHIFT OF SOME 400,000 STUDENTS FROM PAYING TO FREE-LUNCH STATUS, WITHOUT ANY PROVISION FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION. THIS IS PLANNED AT A TIME WHEN YOU AND I KNOW THAT THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS.

L THERE IS NO PROGRAM, EXCEPT PERHAPS SOCIAL SECURITY, THAT IS SO EXCELLENT AN INVESTMENT FOR THE WORKING, TAXPAYING AMERICAN, AS THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM. L IT PROVIDES NUTRITIOUS MEALS AT LOW COST FOR HIS CHILDREN, WHILE ALSO HELPING FEED OTHERS LESS FORTUNATE AND PERHAPS HELPING DIMINISH THE CHANCE THAT THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR TODAY WILL GROW UP TO BE THE PARENTS OF THE POOR IN TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS.

L BUT ALL THAT THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL 1975 BUDGET DOES, WHILE INCREASING EXPENDITURES BY ONE-SIXTH, IS COVER THE COST OF INFLATION.

L THIS BUDGET TACITLY ADMITS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE SOARING COST OF FOOD, AND DOES NOT EXPECT TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT IN THE COMING YEAR, EITHER, THROUGH MID-1975.

L IT IS A MYSTERY WHY THERE SHOULD BE SUCH A PRECIPITOUS  
SCRAMBLE TO SCUTTLE THE COMMODITY PROGRAM L WE HAVE JUST  
EXPERIENCED THE FIRST YEAR IN MEMORY WITHOUT SURPLUSES, BUT  
THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THERE WON'T BE SURPLUSES AGAIN.

L IF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS ITS WAY, AND WE DO AGAIN FIND  
OURSELVES WITH MORE AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES THAN WE CAN  
ABSORB IN ONE YEAR, THE AMERICAN FARMER WOULD BE WITHOUT THE  
INSURANCE POLICY THAT THIS COUNTRY HAS PAINFULLY DEVELOPED OVER  
YEARS AND YEARS.

L BUT THE NEW ASSAULT ON THE COMMODITY PROGRAM CARRIES EVEN  
MORE DANGEROUS IMPLICATIONS.



IF THE COMMODITY PURCHASE SYSTEM WERE SCRAPPED, WE DON'T KNOW THAT THERE WOULD BE -- OR COULD BE -- AN ADEQUATE REPLACEMENT. THE ADMINISTRATION CLAIMS THAT THE STATES AND SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE PERSONNEL COULD BUY JUST AS CHEAPLY AS THE USDA COULD ON THE OPEN MARKET. BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IN PURCHASING POWER IS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE LOCAL UNITS. IF THE USDA CAN BUY A HUNDRED-THOUSAND POUNDS OF CHIDKEN FOR \$100,000, FOR EXAMPLE, WHO IS TO SAY IT MIGHT NOT COST YOU \$150,000 OR \$200,000 TO BUY THE SAME QUANTITY?

NOR HAS THE ADMINISTRATION PROMISED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FINANCING TO SUPPLY YOU AT PRESENT LEVELS OF QUANTITY AND QUALITY IF YOUR COSTS DO EXCEED THOSE UNDER A FEDERAL PURCHASING SYSTEM,

IF THE ADMINISTRATION WERE TO SUCCEED IN ITS TACTICS,  
IT COULD MEAN EITHER A CUTBACK IN THE SCOPE OF YOUR PROGRAMS, OR  
A VAST INCREASE IN YOUR COSTS, OR BOTH. THE PEOPLE WHO  
BENEFIT FROM THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM AND THE TAXPAYER WOULD  
BOTH SUFFER.

WHAT WE MUST DO -- AND WHAT I HAVE JOINED SENATOR  
McGOVERN AND OTHERS IN PROPOSING -- IS TO ADOPT A GUARANTEE  
THAT YOU CAN CONTINUE TO OPERATE AT LEAST AT YOUR CURRENT LEVELS  
THROUGH A CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT COMMODITY PROGRAM WITHOUT  
REDUCTION, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE IS  
FOUND. IF ONE IS NOT PRODUCED, WE THEN MUST REVITALIZE THE  
COMMODITY PURCHASE SYSTEM ITSELF.

PRICE IS NOT THE ONLY ARGUMENT FAVORING THIS APPROACH.

IF WE ALLOW THE ADMINISTRATION TO PRECIPITOUSLY DISMANTLE

THE COMMODITY PROGRAM, WE LOSE IN NUMEROUS OTHER WAYS:

-- WE LOSE THE EXPERTS IN WAREHOUSING AND DISTRIBUTING  
BULK FOODS, WHO HAVE MADE THE USDA PROGRAM FUNCTION ALL THESE  
YEARS. SUDDENLY THE STATES WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE OVER. AT  
PRESENT, ONLY ONE STATE, RHODE ISLAND, THE SMALLEST STATE, HAS  
ITS OWN PURCHASING SYSTEM. THE OTHER 49 WOULD HAVE TO BUILD  
THEIR OWN SYSTEMS OVERNIGHT, AND THEIR RESIDENTS WOULD SUFFER  
WHILE THE BUGS WERE WORKED OUT.

-- WE WOULD LOSE THE FEDERAL INSPECTION SYSTEM THAT HAS GUARANTEED YOU HIGH-QUALITY FOODS FOR YOUR PROGRAMS. THIS IS ANOTHER AREA IN WHICH ABILITY AND FUNDS ARE LACKING AT THE STATE LEVEL. THE USDA HAS AN EXCELLENT CORPS OF MEAT INSPECTORS.

-- THE USDA ALSO HAS A FINE SYSTEM OF MARKET ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE THE BEST TIME TO BUY CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. IF THE STATES AND LOCALITIES WERE FORCED TO DO THEIR OWN BUYING, THEY WOULD FIRST HAVE TO FIND THE EXPERTS TO ADVISE THEM, AND THEN WOULD HAVE TO REPLACE THE EXISTING FEDERAL STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM. CHANCES ARE, YOU WOULD HAVE TO BUY FOR SHORTER TIME PERIODS, EXPOSING YOURSELVES TO MARKET FLUCTUATIONS.

AND IF THE COMMODITY PROGRAM WERE REPLACED WITH CASH THAT WAS ALLOTTED TO YOU AT THE START OF THE YEAR, WHAT WOULD YOU DO WHEN THE PRICE JUMPED AND YOU FOUND YOU HADN'T BEEN PROVIDED ENOUGH CASH?

THE YEUTTER MEMO AND OTHER INDICATIONS FROM USDA HAVE OUTLINED THE ADMINISTRATION STRATEGY. THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO SCRAP THE COMMODITY PROGRAM AND PUSH THE SCHOOL LUNCH AND SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING PROGRAMS OVER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, *Welfare.* EDUCATION AND ~~LABOR~~ THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARGUE THAT THIS IS ONLY LOGICAL, SINCE HEW IS IN THE BUSINESS OF FEEDING PEOPLE, WHILE AGRICULTURE IS SUPPOSED TO DEAL WITH FARMERS.



THAT MAY MAKE SENSE ON SOMEBODY'S ORGANIZATION CHART,  
BUT YOU AND I KNOW THE REALITIES DON'T BEAR THE ARGUMENT OUT.

IF THE FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WERE MOVED OUT OF THE  
AGRICULTURAL AREA AND INTO HEW, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF DEEP  
CUTS BEING MADE IN THE SCHOOL LUNCH AND SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD  
PROGRAM BUDGETS, DUE TO COMPETING PRIORITIES IN SERVICES TO  
PEOPLE.

SECONDLY, IF HEW BECAME THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE SCHOOL  
LUNCH PROGRAMS AND THE RELATED FOOD PROGRAMS, THE NEXT STEP  
COULD BE AN EFFORT TO PUT SOME OF THE THESE PROGRAM FUNDS INTO  
REVENUE-SHARING. THIS WOULD BE JUST ANOTHER SCHEME TO SCRAP A  
SUCCESSFUL FEDERAL PROGRAM AND HAND IT TO THE STATES WITHOUT

ANY GUARANTEE THAT THEY COULD DO AS WELL -- AND I DON'T RECALL  
HAVING HEARD ANY OF THE STATES BEGGING TO BE GIVEN THE  
HEADACHES.

FINALLY, PLACING THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM UNDER HEW'S  
ADMINISTRATION WOULD AUTOMATICALLY LUMP THESE PROGRAMS AMONG  
THE HEW PROGRAMS FOR THE POOR.

ADEQUATE NUTRITION OF THE CHILDREN OF LOWER-INCOME  
FAMILIES DOES REMAIN A PRIMARY NEED TO BE MET IN SCHOOL FOOD  
PROGRAMS. BUT IT IS AN ESSENTIAL BEGINNING POINT, NOT A FINAL  
LIMITATION FOR THESE PROGRAMS. WE HAVE ABUNDANT STATISTICS  
THAT SHOW BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT POOR NUTRITION IN  
AMERICA HAS NO RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT INCOME GROUPS, BUT IS  
WIDESPREAD EVEN AMONG CHILDREN OF FAMILIES WHO COULD BE  
CONSIDERED WELL-OFF.

AND THAT IS PRECISELY WHY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
UNIVERSAL CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM IS OF SUCH VITAL IMPORTANCE.

THERE RECENTLY WAS A REPORT BY THE PUBLIC HEALTH  
SERVICE, WHICH I AM SURE MOST OF YOU READ ABOUT. IT FOUND THAT  
POOR PEOPLE, AND ESPECIALLY POOR BLACK PEOPLE, ARE MOST  
VULNERABLE TO DIETARY DEFICIENCIES. BUT IT ALSO FOUND THAT  
IRON, FOR EXAMPLE, IS DEFICIENT IN THE DIETS OF 95 PERCENT OF  
ALL PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND WOMEN OF CHILD-BEARING AGE. IT  
ALSO FOUND OTHER DEFICIENCIES SHOWED UP EVEN AMONG THE  
AFFLUENT.

A UNIVERSAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM COULD HELP TEACH OUR  
CHILDREN WHAT CONSTITUTES A BALANCED DIET, AND COULD HELP  
DEVELOP THE EATING HABITS THAT COULD LEAD TO A BETTER NOURISHED  
NATION IN THE FUTURE.

THAT, I KNOW, IS YOUR DREAM. I CERTAINLY SHARE IT, AND  
TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT A REALITY.

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