

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
STATEWIDE NUTRITION EDUCATION CONFERENCE
Minneapolis, Minnesota
March 13, 1976

It is a pleasure to be with you and participate in this statewide nutrition education conference. You have assembled a broad and impressive array of talent and representation.

Minnesota has always been a leading state both in the production and processing of nutritious food. We also should lead the nation in developing sound and effective nutrition programs.

Nutrition education is a complex subject and it cannot be easily tackled from a single approach or program. But, clearly it is an issue whose time has come.

In my view, it is important to begin as early as possible to teach the principles of sound nutrition. But, we also need to make it a continuing process throughout life.

While most members of our society have access to ample supplies of food, poor eating habits, bad diets and too little exercise often result in poor health. Too many people eat enough but are poorly fed.

Nutrition is an urgent need and not one confined to a particular economic group. In the words of Dr. Schmidt of the Food and Drug Administration, "the incidence of nutritional deficiencies is provable and numbers in the millions. And these millions are not counted among the poor alone. It is a problem crossing all social and economic boundaries."

In recent years there has been increased consumer interest in nutrition information and education.

This has taken a variety of forms, including the development of food labelling. It also has meant more concern over calories and nutrients. Some people have tried to reverse directions and search for more wholesome natural foods with less stress on convenience packaging.

As a result of economic recession, many people have taken up home gardening -- in part based on economics but also to have more nutritious and wholesome food.

There also has been increased consumer concern over the accuracy of information provided in advertising, and about how additives affect our health.

The complexity of the subject and the constantly changing range of foods offered make it exceedingly difficult for the consumer to reach sound decisions. Better information and nutrition education are a "must" for all age levels.

At the federal level, there is a collection of programs to improve the diets of our elderly and the needy through food stamps and other programs, and to help our children with school lunches and breakfasts and the supplemental feeding program for nursing mothers and infants, known as WIC.

But there is no coordinated effort to get maximum nutritional impact from these efforts. It is interesting to note that the Bureau of the Budget in 1945 recommended continuing the coordination of nutrition policy as had been done during World War II.

The same recommendation was made by the 1969 White House Nutrition Conference and by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1971. An H.E.W. Committee was formed in 1972, but disbanded in 1975.

There are numerous findings which point out the economic importance of better nutrition:

- Improved nutrition helps learning and the development of the brain;

- Improved nutrition increases the capacity for work and raises the productivity and the motivation of workers;

- Improved nutrition results in higher resistance to disease and lowers the severity of disease;

- Improved nutrition decreases fetal, infant, child and even maternal mortality;

- Improved nutrition among poor children would lead to a 10 to 30 percent higher mental achievement.

While there have been rough cost estimates on the results from improving the diet of particular groups, the total benefits are nearly impossible to estimate.

It should be noted, however, that eliminating malnutrition among 3.3 million poor children alone would produce an estimated \$6.3 to \$18.8 billion increase in G.N.P. over the lifetime of these children.

Dr. George Briggs in 1972 suggested that hunger and poor eating habits might cost as much as \$30 billion, or about one third of the nation's annual health costs. Dr. Jean Mayer, one of the nation's leading nutritional experts, estimates that \$130 million or less than one half of a percent of the \$30 billion would provide a solid nutritional education program.

The Nation's medical schools could play an important role but, to date, they have been slow in seizing the opportunity to do more in emphasizing nutrition as a preventive approach in the nation's total health program.

The problem may be growing worse since the Department of Agriculture's 1965 ten year food consumption survey indicated that the number of Americans receiving an adequate diet had declined from 60 to 50 percent. And there is some fear that the next consumption survey -- which has been delayed -- will show a further decline.

The obvious focal point to attack the problem should be the school system and the training we provide there in the early years.

The Congress through successive legislative acts, has made major changes and additions to broaden and improve the effectiveness of the existing child nutrition programs.

Over 25 million children are eating nutritious lunches every day. And the lunch program now is available to nearly 90 percent of all children enrolled in school.

Despite this record we have not scratched the surface in using it to build an effective nutrition education effort. And the establishment of a universal school lunch and nutrition program for all children would be a major step forward.

This is an approach which I have supported because it would bring together the training of the classroom and that of the lunchroom.

It would offer a laboratory experience in terms of cementing the lessons learned in the class.

But the Administration's so-called block grant proposal, contained in the Federal budget for fiscal year 1977, would eliminate existing child nutrition programs -- including the school lunch, the breakfast program, special milk, the child care program, non-food assistance for needy schools, the summer food service program, commodity assistance, and the supplemental feeding program for women, infants and children.

In my view this would represent a serious retreat from a sound nutrition program.

I predict that this effort will not succeed. When Congress approved the National School Lunch Act some 30 years ago, it stated:

"It is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress, as a matter of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children..."

We need to reiterate the importance of good health and nutrition as they relate to our national security.

We began the supplemental feeding program several years ago for nutritionally vulnerable women, infants and children.

I helped get that program started by initiating the legislation and also going to court to force the Department of Agriculture to implement the law.

It has been demonstrated that the absence of an adequate diet before and after birth can have a serious impact on mental development.

This W.I.C. program does not reach even a quarter of the estimated four million mothers and infants who should be in this program.

Here is a program which meets a demonstrated need and which ultimately would yield major benefits in terms of dollars saved and also in richer lives.

But the Department of Agriculture has decided not to follow the Congressional directive that it use any carry-over funds for the program in 1976. And it also is trying to avoid using the full \$250 million provided for this year.

I find it unconscionable that Congress should have to spend so much time just getting these vitally needed nutrition programs back on the track.

We should, instead, be moving forward, because there is so much more that can and must be done.

We obviously will need to do much more to increase consumer information and awareness so that people can make sound decisions.

We also will need to develop better data based on existing programs as a means of developing a comprehensive nutrition education program. I am asking the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment to initiate such a study.

In addition, we need to know more about the nutritional impact of the food stamp program. We have tightened up the rules of this \$6 billion program, but we have little information on its nutritional impact.

Meanwhile, I will continue to press forward in support of a universal nutrition education and food service program in the schools.

We also cannot overlook the critical need for a national food policy so that we will continue to have adequate supplies of food. We must assure our producers a fair return so that they can meet this goal.

We often become so absorbed in the problems of weather, exports or feeding the needy that we take the contribution of the farmer for granted in assuring ample food supplies.

A sound nutrition education program should be an integral part of a national food policy. And we should make it a goal in this bicentennial year.

Our people need and are ready to accept such challenges. I know that, whether in Minnesota or elsewhere, the American people will respond to leadership.

In short, we need to begin to think again in terms of building a better America. I commend you on planning these worthwhile meetings, and in laying out a sound action agenda.

If you point the way and light the fire in the hearts and minds of your countrymen, you will have performed a great service.

Let us work together toward that goal.

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MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

MARCH 13, 1976

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU AND PARTICIPATE IN THIS
STATEWIDE NUTRITION EDUCATION CONFERENCE. YOU HAVE ASSEMBLED
A BROAD AND IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF TALENT AND REPRESENTATION.

MINNESOTA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LEADING STATE BOTH IN
THE PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING OF NUTRITIOUS FOOD. WE ALSO
SHOULD LEAD THE NATION IN DEVELOPING SOUND AND EFFECTIVE
NUTRITION PROGRAMS.

NUTRITION EDUCATION IS A COMPLEX SUBJECT AND IT CANNOT
BE EASILY TACKLED FROM A SINGLE APPROACH OR PROGRAM. BUT,
CLEARLY IT IS AN ISSUE WHOSE TIME HAS COME.

IN MY VIEW, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEGIN AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE
TO TEACH THE PRINCIPLES OF SOUND NUTRITION. BUT, WE ALSO
NEED TO MAKE IT A CONTINUING PROCESS THROUGHOUT LIFE.

WHILE MOST MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY HAVE ACCESS TO AMPLE
SUPPLIES OF FOOD, POOR EATING HABITS, BAD DIETS AND TOO LITTLE
EXERCISE OFTEN RESULT IN POOR HEALTH. TOO MANY PEOPLE EAT
ENOUGH BUT ARE POORLY FED.

NUTRITION IS AN URGENT NEED AND NOT ONE CONFINED TO A
PARTICULAR ECONOMIC GROUP. IN THE WORDS OF DR. SCHMIDT OF
THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, "THE INCIDENCE OF NUTRITIONAL
DEFICIENCIES IS PROVABLE AND NUMBERS IN THE MILLIONS. AND
THESE MILLIONS ARE NOT COUNTED AMONG THE POOR ALONE. IT IS
A PROBLEM CROSSING ALL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BOUNDARIES."

IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAS BEEN INCREASED CONSUMER
INTEREST IN NUTRITION INFORMATION AND EDUCATION.

THIS HAS TAKEN A VARIETY OF FORMS, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT
OF FOOD LABELLING. IT ALSO HAS MEANT MORE CONCERN OVER CALORIES
AND NUTRIENTS. SOME PEOPLE HAVE TRIED TO REVERSE DIRECTIONS AND
SEARCH FOR MORE WHOLESOME NATURAL FOODS WITH LESS STRESS ON
CONVENIENCE PACKAGING.

AS A RESULT OF ECONOMIC RECESSION, MANY PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN
UP HOME GARDENING -- IN PART BASED ON ECONOMICS BUT ALSO TO HAVE
MORE NUTRITIOUS AND WHOLESOME FOOD.

THERE ALSO HAS BEEN INCREASED CONSUMER CONCERN OVER THE
ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED IN ADVERTISING, AND ABOUT HOW *food*
ADDITIVES AFFECT OUR HEALTH.

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SUBJECT AND THE CONSTANTLY CHANGING
RANGE OF FOODS OFFERED MAKE IT EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT FOR THE
CONSUMER TO REACH SOUND DECISIONS.

BETTER INFORMATION AND NUTRITION EDUCATION ARE A "MUST" FOR
ALL AGE LEVELS.

AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL, THERE IS A COLLECTION OF PROGRAMS
TO IMPROVE THE DIETS OF OUR ELDERLY AND THE NEEDY THROUGH
FOOD STAMPS AND OTHER PROGRAMS, AND TO HELP OUR CHILDREN
WITH SCHOOL LUNCHES AND BREAKFASTS AND THE SUPPLEMENTAL
FEEDING PROGRAM FOR NURSING MOTHERS AND INFANTS, KNOWN AS WIC.

Fed Programs

BUT THERE IS NO COORDINATED EFFORT TO GET MAXIMUM
NUTRITIONAL IMPACT FROM THESE EFFORTS. IT IS INTERESTING
TO NOTE THAT THE BUREAU OF THE BUDGET IN 1945 RECOMMENDED
CONTINUING THE COORDINATION OF NUTRITION POLICY AS HAD BEEN
DONE DURING WORLD WAR II.

THE SAME RECOMMENDATION WAS MADE BY THE 1969 WHITE
HOUSE NUTRITION CONFERENCE AND BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION, AND WELFARE IN 1971. AN H.E.W. COMMITTEE WAS
FORMED IN 1972, BUT DISBANDED IN 1975.

THERE ARE NUMEROUS FINDINGS WHICH POINT OUT THE ECONOMIC
IMPORTANCE OF BETTER NUTRITION:

-- IMPROVED NUTRITION HELPS LEARNING AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE BRAIN;

-- IMPROVED NUTRITION INCREASES THE CAPACITY FOR WORK
AND RAISES THE PRODUCTIVITY AND THE MOTIVATION OF WORKERS;

-- IMPROVED NUTRITION RESULTS IN HIGHER RESISTANCE
TO DISEASE AND LOWERS THE SEVERITY OF DISEASE;

-- IMPROVED NUTRITION DECREASES FETAL, INFANT, CHILD
AND EVEN MATERNAL MORTALITY;

↳ -- IMPROVED NUTRITION AMONG POOR CHILDREN WOULD LEAD
TO A 10 TO 30 PERCENT HIGHER MENTAL ACHIEVEMENT.

↳ WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN ROUGH COST ESTIMATES ON THE
RESULTS FROM IMPROVING THE DIET OF PARTICULAR GROUPS, THE
TOTAL BENEFITS ARE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE.

↳ IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT ELIMINATING
MALNUTRITION AMONG 3.3 MILLION POOR CHILDREN ALONE WOULD
PRODUCE AN ESTIMATED \$6.3 TO \$18.8 BILLION INCREASE IN
G.N.P. OVER THE LIFETIME OF THESE CHILDREN.

↳ DR. GEORGE BRIGGS IN 1972 SUGGESTED THAT HUNGER AND POOR
EATING HABITS MIGHT COST AS MUCH AS \$30 BILLION, OR ABOUT
ONE THIRD OF THE NATION'S ANNUAL HEALTH COSTS.

↳ DR. JEAN MAYER, ONE OF THE NATION'S LEADING NUTRITIONAL EXPERTS,
ESTIMATES THAT \$130 MILLION OR LESS THAN ONE HALF OF ^{one} PERCENT
OF THE \$30 BILLION, WOULD PROVIDE A SOLID NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM.

↳ THE NATION'S MEDICAL SCHOOLS COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE
BUT, TO DATE, THEY HAVE BEEN SLOW IN SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY TO
DO MORE IN EMPHASIZING NUTRITION AS A PREVENTIVE APPROACH IN
THE NATION'S TOTAL HEALTH PROGRAM.

↳ THE PROBLEM MAY BE GROWING WORSE SINCE THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE'S 1965 TEN YEAR FOOD CONSUMPTION SURVEY INDICATED THAT
THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS RECEIVING AN ADEQUATE DIET HAD DECLINED FROM
60 TO 50 PERCENT, AND THERE IS SOME FEAR THAT THE NEXT CONSUMPTION
SURVEY -- WHICH HAS BEEN DELAYED -- WILL SHOW A FURTHER DECLINE.

L THE OBVIOUS FOCAL POINT TO ATTACK THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE
THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE TRAINING WE PROVIDE THERE IN THE
EARLY YEARS.

L THE CONGRESS THROUGH SUCCESSIVE LEGISLATIVE ACTS, HAS
MADE MAJOR CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO BROADEN AND IMPROVE
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EXISTING CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS.

L OVER 25 MILLION CHILDREN ARE EATING NUTRITIOUS LUNCHES
EVERY DAY. ^{School} AND THE LUNCH PROGRAM NOW IS AVAILABLE TO NEARLY
90 PERCENT OF ALL CHILDREN ENROLLED IN SCHOOL.

L DESPITE THIS RECORD WE HAVE NOT SCRATCHED THE SURFACE IN
USING IT TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE NUTRITION EDUCATION EFFORT. AND
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIVERSAL SCHOOL LUNCH AND NUTRITION
PROGRAM FOR ALL CHILDREN WOULD BE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD.

THIS IS AN APPROACH WHICH I HAVE SUPPORTED BECAUSE IT
WOULD BRING TOGETHER THE TRAINING OF THE CLASSROOM AND THAT
OF THE LUNCHROOM.

IT WOULD OFFER A LABORATORY EXPERIENCE IN TERMS OF
CEMENTING THE LESSONS LEARNED IN THE CLASS.

BUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S SO-CALLED BLOCK GRANT PROPOSAL,
CONTAINED IN THE FEDERAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 1977, WOULD
ELIMINATE EXISTING CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS -- INCLUDING
THE SCHOOL LUNCH, THE BREAKFAST PROGRAM, SPECIAL MILK, THE
CHILD CARE PROGRAM, NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY SCHOOLS, THE
SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM, COMMODITY ASSISTANCE, AND THE
SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN.

cut 1 1/2 Billion

IN MY VIEW THIS WOULD REPRESENT A SERIOUS RETREAT FROM
A SOUND NUTRITION PROGRAM.

I PREDICT THAT THIS EFFORT WILL NOT SUCCEED: WHEN
CONGRESS APPROVED THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH ACT SOME 30 YEARS

AGO, IT STATED:

"IT IS HEREBY DECLARED TO BE THE POLICY OF CONGRESS, AS
A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY, TO SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH AND
WELL-BEING OF THE NATION'S CHILDREN..."

And WE NEED TO REITERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD HEALTH AND
NUTRITION AS THEY RELATE TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY.

h WE BEGAN THE SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING PROGRAM SEVERAL YEARS
AGO FOR NUTRITIONALLY VULNERABLE WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN.

L I HELPED GET THAT PROGRAM STARTED BY INITIATING THE
LEGISLATION AND ALSO GOING TO COURT TO FORCE THE DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE TO IMPLEMENT THE LAW.

L IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT THE ABSENCE OF AN ADEQUATE
DIET BEFORE AND AFTER BIRTH CAN HAVE A SERIOUS IMPACT ON
MENTAL DEVELOPMENT.

L BUT THIS W.I.C. PROGRAM DOES NOT REACH EVEN A QUATER^R OF THE
ESTIMATED FOUR MILLION MOTHERS AND INFANTS WHO SHOULD BE IN
THIS PROGRAM.

L HERE IS A PROGRAM WHICH MEETS A DEMONSTRATED NEED AND
WHICH ULTIMATELY WOULD YIELD MAJOR BENEFITS IN TERMS OF
DOLLARS SAVED AND ALSO IN RICHER LIVES.

L BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS DECIDED NOT TO
FOLLOW THE CONGRESSIONAL DIRECTIVE THAT IT USE ANY CARRY-OVER
FUNDS FOR THE PROGRAM IN 1976. AND IT ALSO IS TRYING TO AVOID
USING THE FULL \$250 MILLION PROVIDED FOR THIS YEAR.

L I FIND IT UNCONSCIONABLE THAT CONGRESS SHOULD HAVE
TO SPEND SO MUCH TIME JUST GETTING THESE VITALLY NEEDED
NUTRITION PROGRAMS BACK ON THE TRACK.

L WE SHOULD, INSTEAD, BE MOVING FORWARD, BECAUSE THERE
IS SO MUCH MORE THAT CAN AND MUST BE DONE.

L WE OBVIOUSLY WILL NEED TO DO MUCH MORE TO INCREASE
CONSUMER INFORMATION AND AWARENESS SO THAT PEOPLE CAN MAKE

SOUND DECISIONS

on food and its nutritional quality.

h WE ALSO WILL NEED TO DEVELOP A BETTER DATA BASE ON
EXISTING PROGRAMS AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE
NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM. I AM ASKING THE CONGRESSIONAL
OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT TO INITIATE SUCH A STUDY.

h IN ADDITION, WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE NUTRITIONAL
IMPACT OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. WE HAVE TIGHTENED UP THE
RULES OF THIS \$6 BILLION PROGRAM, BUT WE HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION
ON ITS NUTRITIONAL IMPACT. (advertising food
nutrition.)

Food
Stamps

h MEANWHILE, I WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FORWARD IN SUPPORT OF A
UNIVERSAL NUTRITION EDUCATION AND FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM IN THE SCHOOLS.

~~Food Policy~~
h WE ALSO CANNOT OVERLOOK THE CRITICAL NEED FOR A NATIONAL
FOOD POLICY SO THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF
FOOD. WE MUST ASSURE OUR PRODUCERS A FAIR RETURN SO THAT THEY
CAN MEET THIS GOAL.

WE OFTEN BECOME SO ABSORBED IN THE PROBLEMS OF WEATHER,
EXPORTS OR FEEDING THE NEEDY THAT WE TAKE THE CONTRIBUTION
OF THE FARMER FOR GRANTED IN ASSURING AMPLE FOOD SUPPLIES.

A SOUND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM SHOULD BE AN
INTEGRAL PART OF A NATIONAL FOOD POLICY. AND WE SHOULD MAKE
IT A GOAL IN THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR.

OUR PEOPLE NEED AND ARE READY TO ACCEPT SUCH CHALLENGES.
I KNOW THAT, WHETHER IN MINNESOTA OR ELSEWHERE, THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE WILL RESPOND TO LEADERSHIP.

IN SHORT, WE NEED TO BEGIN TO THINK AGAIN IN TERMS OF
BUILDING A BETTER AMERICA. I COMMEND YOU ON PLANNING THESE
WORTHWHILE MEETINGS, AND IN LAYING OUT A SOUND ACTION AGENDA.

IF YOU POINT THE WAY AND LIGHT THE FIRE IN THE HEARTS
AND MINDS OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN, YOU WILL HAVE PERFORMED A
GREAT SERVICE.

LET US WORK TOGETHER TOWARD THAT GOAL.

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