

hunger at the crossroads: 10 million to feed

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... concern for the health of especially vulnerable groups such as pregnant and nursing mothers and the elderly, the whole work of the food industry from food safety, packaging, labeling, new foods, and of course, especially all of the programs dealing with the delivery of food to the hungry.

Q. In your opinion, participation is voluntary.
A. Since you are an authority on a rather voluminous report to be submitted to the President, can you give us your opinion as to what you think must be done currently to curb hunger in the nation that we are now aware exists?

A. In terms of the immediate issue of those people really suffering from hunger and malnutrition we must use whatever avenues we have to get either commodity programs or food stamp programs or emergency food programs into every county in the nation. In terms of a long range answer to the program, that's a much more complicated area.

Q. Do you think that the government is moving in this direction to involve itself in each county as such.

A. This is one of the pledges the President made to the conference last week, that within six months, and we hope much faster than that, there will be a food program in every county.

Q. In the study that has recently been done do we get an indication as to where the really serious problems are occurring, what part of the country they are in, and how bad off the people really are?

A. You'll find it everywhere from the Indian reservation to the Southwest part of the country, Appalachia, in the South, you'll find it in urban areas as well as rural areas. You'll probably find those with no income at all most often located in the South, but you will find across the board in every community some people, at least, who are unable to buy an adequate diet out of what money comes into the home.

Q. This includes northeastern Pennsylvania as well?

A. Yes, it does.
Q. Have you been involved, to any extent, from a local standpoint with the problem of hunger.

A. I have been attempting to motivate groups to do a survey of what the local condition is based on the fact that we do have food stamp programs and since, in Lackawanna County, we have over 9000 people on welfare. This statistic in itself indicates that they don't have an adequate amount for food because the food dollar is the first one cut and welfare payments are not adequate to have housing, clothing, and medicine and so forth without cutting into the food dollar.

Q. You mentioned Lackawanna County. Do you have the figures for Luzerne County as well?

A. No, I do not. The welfare proposal at present in Pennsylvania overall allows 21 cents per meal, but this includes not only money for food but for household products and other items like laundry soap, tooth paste, etc.

Q. There seemed to be some discontent among the people who attended the conference who complained that the conference was a lot of talk when hunger was a terribly pressing problem in America today. What was your reaction to those people who seemed to be impatient with what was going on?

A. First of all, I was completely sympathetic because I have been in the Southwest and the South and I have seen the hungry babies. There were over 400 people of the legitimately

hard corps poor at the conference; Indian-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, blacks, Appalachia blacks and whites. They all had the same complaint that there are people actually going hungry. When you yourself or your children are literally hungry and going without meal after meal, it's awfully hard to see people talking about how much iron should go into the milk that you buy. They just want food, fortified or unfortified. And so the dynamics of the situation of bringing this confrontation contributed, I'm sure, greatly to the fact that I feel it was the most spiritual experience that I have ever been a part of.

Q. When the six of you had your hour-long conversation with the President did you represent this point of view? Did you let him know the feelings of the more militant participants, and if so, what was his reaction?

A. This was really the main thrust of our conversation; the call for him to take emergency action. It was based not only on the militant voice but the fact that even if it was a man who had a multimillion-dollar income as a result of being president of a food company or if it was a poor, illiterate person, there was total unanimity in the call to do something now about hunger. This was the main thrust of our message because the publicity that had come out indicated that it was just a lot of angry voices criticizing the President, and the implication was that these angry voices were only the poor. But it was really a universal call, and so we emphasized to him that this was not an abstract question, that it was a guts kind of question. I got so serious about it that I even cried a little. But the fact that we did not come back from the meeting with a specific promise by the President in words to do something that day continued to frustrate the poor because they felt that we had not done the job we were sent to do.

Q. When the conference was over, what was the reaction on the militant side?
A. Still frustrated. They had felt all along, and wrongly I might say, that the conference was structured to keep their voice out. This wasn't true. Dr. Mayer (chairman of the conference) from the very beginning had tried to include them at every level. But, they've had so many written words and technical discussions and structure meetings, none of which have come out with any answers, and then the fact that they had the meeting and we still didn't come out with something they could hang onto. They were frustrated. They don't have enough faith in this administration or enough faith in this system that it can work for all the people. This is what we have to demonstrate by taking action, and not just by the President and Congress taking action. It has to happen at the local level, too.

Q. I recall that Senator McGovern, shortly after his trip to the South earlier this year, said that he was very much afraid of the same thing... that the people were in arms against the system rather than against any one administration. Did you get this same feeling?
A. When you have been kept out of the system and its benefits for so long I think this is understandable.

Q. In what order of priority would you put ending hunger insofar as what the government must do for America today?
A. Since food means life and

if we can't guarantee life to our citizens I'd say it was first priority. But, in a general sense, the priority of individual human worth is, to me, the important thing whether you are discussing the issue of Vietnam or how a welfare program is administered or anything else that Americans should be interested in. It is the fact that each individual life is important.

Q. If you had the opportunity to draw up a program for attacking hunger that you knew would be instituted immediately, how would you go about setting it up?

A. Most of the recommendations are good that have been made about simplifying the food programs under a federal eligibility standard so that local politicians can't keep somebody out of the program. We need a certification that is a simple statement of need rather than all of the fantastic red tape. We must make the food program easily available not at a certain day of the week at an out of the way location, but when and where it is convenient to the hungry.

Q. Where would the money come from?

A. The amount of money actually needed to reach the 10 or 12 million hungry with food stamp or food commodity programs is not that great... \$2 or \$3 billion a year. In two or three years Dr. Mayer, who is my authority, estimates we really could do it. So it is not a major amount of money. It is a matter of making sure the programs reach the people they are intended to reach.

Q. Since the needed money is not that great, do you think the problem lies in a lack of commitment or is the system set up just inefficient?

A. The first thing is that, as of now, a lot of people that would be eligible for the programs are not even aware that they are eligible because there has been, I don't know whether it is a deliberate effort to hide the programs, but there certainly has not been a deliberate effort to publicize them. We are suggesting as women at the conference, among other things, to get this to be a spot announcement on radio and television like the Peace Corps or Vista, just to educate the people that it is available. Then there is the problem that sometimes you need an advocate to help you go to a bureaucracy and ask to be included. When you have a limited amount of money the mere cost of transportation to and from the source of food may keep you from having enough money to get the food. There are a lot of ways that just the public sector can enter into helping people.

Q. Is the \$2 to \$3 billion figure that you use the estimate to completely eliminate hunger in the United States?
A. The hunger of the hard-core poor. Now, there are estimates that maybe there are 25 million Americans on incomes that keep them from getting an adequate fully nutritious diet. But that is different from those people that just are undernourished or with no nourishment part of the month.

Q. How many hard-core hungry are there locally?
A. It is just the same as nationally. We have not done the survey to determine who they are, and so just as the poor

were frustrated by all this technical business about surveying and monitoring programs nationally, this is a very good illustration of why there has to be a survey to find the people locally.

Q. In the 9000 people that you mentioned are on welfare in Lackawanna County, are you aware whether or not there is any individual ethnic group that makes up the majority of this number?

A. I think it goes across the ethnic lines because I know we have been doing some surveying in terms of our inter-faith program for meals-on-wheels for shut-ins and we're doing that in West Scranton. We are discovering, just as we knew, that there were elderly people on an inadequate diet because of inadequate income.

Q. You mentioned long range program. Can you elaborate on that.

A. In the area of surveying and monitoring, we, as a nation, have done over 30 surveys of hunger in other nations and only one in our own country. So, number one, we have to look for the specifics in our own country, and this has been begun by Dr. Shafer of the Public Health Service. On the basis of his first study he says it is a conservative estimate that there are 10 million hungry in this country. In terms of reaching special groups, one of the specifics is that we now have adequate pre-natal care for only 55 percent of our pregnant women. This must be increased at a rapidly rising rate because that if a pregnant woman or an infant up to one or two years old does not get adequate protein they are permanently retarded physically and mentally. Education... it's not just the poor who must have knowledge about the right foods to buy, it's all of us; but a corollary to that is that the right foods must be there to buy. Thirty years ago we were enriching our milk and having iodized salt, and today it is not unusual to buy non-fortified milk, non-fortified bread and salt which has not been iodized, which effects our health.

Q. President Nixon said that he would work toward eliminating hunger in America altogether, and he has pledged that within six months he will be involved county by county throughout the country. Has he, in your opinion, shown that he means what he says. Did you get the impression from your conference with the President that he would really push on this hunger program?

A. Very definitely. I asked him specifically what I could say to the press about the promises he was making to us. He said that he would immediately investigate the suggestions that we had made for emergency action, but that he wasn't interested in saying something without backing it up with action. Secondly, that as soon as he got the report he would include the recommendations in his budget message to Congress.

Q. Getting back to President Nixon's pledge to eradicate hunger in America, did you come back from this conference with the impression that the country would be well on its way towards solving this problem by the end of Mr. Nixon's current term?

A. Yes, because we are al-

ready up to about the \$2 billion figure on the basis of the adjustment between the House and Senate bill which will be some place between \$610 million and \$750 million, and this will have to come in the last six months. If you cost that out over where it is projected for the next fiscal year it is a tremendous increase, up close to the \$2 billion figure. Financially, therefore, we have a good start. Most of the reforms that I suggested are written into either the administration bill or the McGovern bill. Therefore, most of the reforms will take place. The President's pledge to follow through on some of the other programs, like a survey that will tell us precisely where the people are... all of these things combined should do it. But I still say that it cannot be done alone by a conference or by a President. It is going to take local people caring. The fact that if we discover that there are any people in that desperately poor, hungry group it should not be morally acceptable for us to sit still and allow it to happen. It's just that simple; whether or not we can move the American conscience. I've been saying in a lot of speeches that I think we are moving into a new isolationism that bothers me far more than the isolationism I was aware of when I lived in the midwest before World War II where we sort of put two oceans to separate us from everybody. Now I think we are closing our front doors. Whether we are doing it because we say the problems are too big and therefore my puny efforts aren't going to effect it or whether we are doing it because we say 'I've got all I can do to take care of my family and my own and I just can't be bothered; either way to me is a frightening attitude. I would think that the concern for hunger would be the kind of issue that might draw us out and make us realize that we are, in our single effort, able to effect the problem, and that it is our problem if our brother is hungry.

township Eagle editor adopts budget to tour country

by DORIS MALLIN

William Scranton 3d, editor of The Mountaintop Eagle, will be temporarily leaving his desk for an extended trip throughout the United States, particularly the West, J.R. Freeman, news director of Northeastern Newspapers Inc., announced this week. Northeastern publishes The Mountaintop Eagle, The Dallas Post and The Abington Journal.

During his travels, Mr. Scranton will dispatch to Northeastern readers a weekly column devoted to his impressions of other parts of the country, as well as its media. The latter effort will entail close examination of what other weekly newspapers and newspaper chains are doing and why.

While Mr. Scranton is away from his editor's desk, his responsibilities will be absorbed by others on the NNI staff. Linda Garman of Mountaintop will act as assistant editor, Mr. Freeman also announced.

Mr. Scranton, a recent Yale graduate and son of former Governor and Mrs. William Scranton, joined the NNI staff in September, and became editor of The Eagle shortly thereafter when the former Mountaintop newspaper was acquired by Northeastern. The newspaper's name and format was changed to what is now The Mountaintop Eagle. The three newspapers are published by Henry Null 4th.

The budget for the year 1970 was adopted at the Dallas Township supervisors meeting Dec. 3. The amount is \$142,546.09. Included in this amount is the \$2000 expected to be used for hooking into the emergency communications network.

The tax ordinance for 1970 is to be advertised. It amounts to a \$3 per capita tax per person, a \$2 per month fee on house trailers and a 1 percent real estate transfer tax.

Ken Rice, developer of Orchard View Terrace, appeared before the board to request that Windsor Drive be taken over by the township. Chairman Fred Lamoreaux had inspected the road and said it was not up to township specifications. The board of supervisors approved the road base and black top but said a five foot berm must exist on either side of the road to permit proper drainage. Chairman Lamoreaux said the defects must be corrected before the street can be taken over. In its present condition it cannot be maintained by the township.

It was announced that a special rezoning meeting will be held by the Dallas Township Planning and Zoning Commission Dec. 16 to review the application of Paul Schalm to build a 150 unit apartment complex "Brandywine" on a 25 acre site off Route 309 overlooking the Country Club.

Solicitor Frank Townend commended a township resident, Albert E. Torr, Highland Drive, New Goss Manor, for rendering aid and assistance to a motorist whose car had run into a cornfield.

Secretary Glen Howell was authorized to advertise for a loader needed by the Road Department and to put it up for bids.

A letter was received from the Dallas school board requesting a light at the crossing of Route 309 and East Center Hill Road. It was reported that the crossing was surveyed by traffic engineers over two weeks ago, but the township has not received any official notification from Harrisburg yet.

It was reported that the heat in the new township building is still not satisfactory. Chairman Lamoreaux said there is a 30 degree difference in temperature in the garage. A bill for heating and lighting for the last billing period was estimated to be too high. Secretary Howell was authorized to write a letter to the UGI Corporation complaining about the excessive amount.

fire reported at laundry center

A fire was reported at the Shavertown Laundrycenter in the Back Mountain Shopping Center Tuesday, Dec. 2 at 8:30 p.m. Shavertown Volunteer Fire Company responded to the alarm and extinguished a small blaze caused by a ceiling block falling on a dryer. It is believed that a leak in the roof of the building caused the ceiling tile to fall. The Laundrycenter is owned by Robert H. Schalm, Dallas.

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