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COMMITTEE ON THE WORLD FOOD CRISIS

P.O. BOX 7226 • WASHINGTON, D. C. 20004

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TO KANSAS ASSOCIATES:

Many of you receiving this letter have followed developments of our Committee since it was organized last December 9th. We, of course, are delighted that the House and Senate Conferees brought out such a historic piece of legislation as the Food For Peace Act of 1966. While its major goal is the alleviation of Hunger throughout the World as a giant step towards insuring Peace, it will also have an immensely beneficial effect on American Agriculture.

When I visited with Governor William Avery in Topeka last fall to enlist his support in this national effort, I frankly didn't expect to make this much progress so soon. For some time many of us have been concerned about the mushrooming food crisis in the developing nations. A lot has been written and a great deal done - but nothing on the scope now possible. Not only did Governor Avery endorse the purposes of the group trying to organize the Committee on the World Food Crisis but he agreed to be one of the Keynoters of the Organizational Meeting at the Washington Hilton Hotel, December 9th.

He was joined in this effort, which brought over 400 Church, farm, labor and business leaders from coast to coast to Washington, by the following participants in the formal program: Paul G. Hoffman, former President of the Studebaker Corporation and now Head of the United Nations Development Programme; James J. O'Connor, President, American Freedom From Hunger Foundation; Senator George McGovern, of South Dakota, the first Food For Peace Director; Congressman Harold Cooley of North Carolina, Chairman of the House Committee of Agriculture; Herschel D. Newsom, Master of the National Grange; and Robert C. Liebenow, President of the Corn Refiners Association.



Governor
William H. Avery

*Members of Executive Committee

Some of the highlights of the Governor's December 9th Address follow:

"After reviewing the background of the distinguished speakers on the program today, it seemed most appropriate that I should confine my remarks to the economics of the producers' viewpoint. By thus proceeding, I will defer to the other speakers the philosophical questions, particularly as they relate to moral questions and the relationship of this proposed program to foreign policy and peace crusade.

"It is self-evident that before we proceed to any great extent in this discussion today, or in a similar exploration later, some stipulations must be set out.

"First, are we merely discussing an accelerated distribution plan for our present food stocks, or, are we planning full utilization and employment of our total agricultural resources?

"Second, speaking as one representative from the great food-producing region of this nation, I feel we must consider the element of agricultural prices to the producer, if we are considering the full utilization of our agricultural plant....

"You can probably understand, as a representative of the great middle west agricultural area, I would look generally with favor on a higher level of production. This higher level of production would considerably enhance the agricultural income of the region. It is also important to note that regardless of controls or price supports, agricultural commodities are one of the few American products that can be produced at a cost to favorably compete on the world market without a subsidy.

"Before the American farmer is committed to any contemplated world food programs, it is my contention that the farmer is entitled to some assurances that he will not be expected to produce for this program at less than a reasonable return for his work and a reasonable return on his investment....

"And finally, I am concerned that we may be inclined to get ourselves committed to a program whose dimensions may explode before it even gets under way. The news media reports increased need for food nearly every day. It seems to me we could do violence to our foreign policy and international image of this nation, if we inadvertently lead under developed nations to become dependent on our food supply, without some economic and social adjustments made simultaneously within the recipient nations....

"I think we have a moral obligation in the matter of sharing our food stocks. We have an obligation to ourselves, however, to make certain that our commitments do not outpace our anticipated productivity, with the result that benevolence would bring down our own house."



Gov. William Avery keynoting the December 9th Organizational Meeting of the Committee on the World Food Crisis at the Washington Hilton Hotel. Seated at the headtable are: (L-R) Cong. Lynn E. Stalbaum, Wis., and Paul Findley, Ill., members of the House Committee on Agriculture; Robert C. Liebenow, President, Corn Refiners Assn.; Cong. Harold D. Cooley, N. C., Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture; and Cong. John C. Mackie, Mich., also a member of the House Committee on Agriculture.

It was not long after the December 9th Meeting when its effects began to be seen. Chairman Cooley of the House Agriculture Committee announced during his presentation that he felt very strongly about the facts which had been presented and that he would introduce a Bill shortly after Congress convened in January. On January 19th he introduced his Bill entitled "World War on Hunger" authorizing an increase of \$1 billion a year to implement the broadening of existing programs. When he opened the very extensive Hearings he said, "On January 19, 1966, I introduced in the House a Bill to wage world war on hunger, to amend the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954.

"This legislation was developed after I attended an organizational meeting on December 9th of the Committee on World Food Crisis. This meeting was attended by many prominent representatives of 150 odd organizations, associations, and prominent individuals, all very much concerned about the possibility of a food famine in the world. At this meeting, we were told that hundreds of thousands of people - in fact, millions - in the world were starving every day, and it seemed to me to be a little bit incongruous for us to continue to restrict our acreage in America while we are facing starvation in other areas of the world."

Another member of the House Committee on Agriculture is Congressman Bob Dole of Kansas' 1st District. From this vantage point he has become well informed on the World Food Crisis. Last fall he was an official representative of the House to the Food and Agricultural Organization's 20th Anniversary Conference in Rome, Italy. As he studied this rapidly expanding world problem, he concluded that one of the reasons for our great strength was our farmers ability to produce abundantly. On March 17, 1966, he introduced his "Bread and Butter Crops" Bill which would provide a procedure for our farmers' "know how" to be shared with the farmers of the developing nations.

As the Hearings on the Food For Peace Act of 1966 brought forth expert witnesses stressing the critical problem and possible solutions Congressman Dole prevailed upon his colleagues on the Committee to adopt what is now known as the "farmer-to-farmer" amendment.



Congressman
Bob Dole



(L-R) Cong. Bob Dole attending one of the many meetings arranged to develop and coordinate grass roots support for the Food For Peace Act of 1966; James J. O'Connor, President of the American Freedom From Hunger Foundation; Herschel D. Newsom, Master of the National Grange and Chairman of the Committee on the World Food Crisis; Cong. Lynn E. Stalbaum, Wis., member of the House Committee on Agriculture; and Willard E. Johnson, former Executive Director of the American Freedom From Hunger Foundation.

Enclosed is a Congressional Reprint of some of Congressman Bob Dole's remarks concerning the Food For Peace Act of 1966 - one of the more outstanding pieces of legislation passed by the 89th Congress. The work and know-how of these two Kansans developing grass root support, not only in Kansas but throughout the Nation, played a vital role in creating this forward looking legislation.

While this legislation has not yet been signed into law, many areas of the Nation, including Kansas, have already felt its effect. First, Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman authorized an increase of 15% in the Wheat acreage followed by another 15%, or 32.5% altogether. He also asked for an increase of 1 million acres of soybeans and a 10% increase in rice. These increases will add over 16 million acres to the Nation's cropland in direct production of needed crops. In line with Governor Avery's warning at the December 9th Meeting, all concerned are taking the necessary steps to insure the proper protection of the American Farmer who heeds this call for increased production.

The legislation about to be enacted into law - and actually may be the law of the land before you receive this - provides \$7.4 billion over the next two years. This will enable an expansion of over 50% in our present programs. While we hope to prevent millions from starving and develop "self-help" programs to prevent future starving and thus insure Peace, there are, as Governor Avery said when keynoting our meeting, major economic benefits possible. With the elimination of the "surplus" concept, American Agriculture can produce, as a key part of our Foreign Aid Program, bread instead of bullets. The resulting benefit will accrue not just to farmers but to our total economy.

Thanks to Statesmen like Governor Bill Avery and Congressman Bob Dole, this Nation has embarked on a massive effort to alleviate the World Food Crisis and thus help bring about World Peace.

Before closing I must not fail to mention that both these men are following in the footsteps of other great Kansans. Clifford Hope, one of the most respected men in American Agriculture and a long-time member of the House Committee on Agriculture, was Chairman when Public Law 480, the forerunner of this legislation, was passed. The late Senator Andrew F. Schoepel was also a pioneer in this field. And so Kansas can take great pride in the leadership it is furnishing through its elected representatives to further not only its economic needs but the needs of all humanity.

Sincerely yours,



Robert M. Koch
Executive Director

Enclosure:
Congressional Reprint



Cong. Bob Dole discussing legislation with me in the corridor outside of the House Chamber.