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Committee on Agriculture  
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HEARING SET ON AID TO QUAKE STRICKEN SKOPJE

Chairman Harold D. Cooley of the House Committee on Agriculture announced today the Foreign Agricultural Operations Subcommittee, headed by Rep. W. R. (Bob) Poage of Texas, will hold a public hearing Thursday, September 26, on aid of an "identifiable and lasting nature" for the people of Skopje, Yugoslavia, laid waste July 26 by an earthquake.

Mr. Cooley set the hearing upon the return of Members of Congress who visited the stricken city. The members were delegates to the Interparliamentary Union meeting at Belgrade and between sessions of that body visited Skopje to view the extent of the devastation there.

Secretary of Agriculture Freeman, who was in Europe at the time the quake hit Skopje, announced from Belgrade that \$50,000,000 worth of the Yugoslav currency held by the United States, would be made available for relief operations. The Yugoslav currency was accumulated from the sales of U. S. agricultural products in that country under the Food For Peace Program.

Mr. Poage was one of the group that visited Skopje.

"Our government made the announcement of \$50,000,000 for relief there," he said, "but when we visited the city there was no evidence of Americans active in works of relief. The United States did send in a medical unit which did a splendid job. But now we have more or less withdrawn American personnel.

"On the other hand Russia has sent in a company of army engineers, and they are very much in the view of the people there.

"All of us who visited Skopje agreed that relief should and must be given. It is my feeling, and I think this is joined-in by all the other Members of Congress who visited the city, that two things should be done:

"1. We should use the \$50,000,000 we have provided to undertake a program of aid in such a way that the Yugoslav people will understand that it is coming from the United States. I think we should offer the city the services of Army Engineers, in uniform and with heavy engineering equipment, to clear the debris and make ready for the restoration of the city. We have the engineers and the equipment already stationed in Europe.

"2. Then we should direct at least a part of the \$50,000,000 into permanent construction that can be identified with the United States in the years to come. It is suggested that we build hospitals or schools, that we rebuild the university there, or perhaps build 50 apartment buildings to house people whose homes were destroyed, and name the buildings after each of our States - as evidence of the people to people friendship we are striving to achieve around the world."

Spokesmen for the State, Defense and Agriculture Departments will testify at Thursday's hearing, which will be held in the Committee Hearing Room, 1310 New (Longworth) House Office Building, opening at 10 a.m.

"If what we are suggesting is wrong, we want the representatives of these Departments to tell us why," Mr. Poage said. "We want them to say what they think is the best approach."

Skopje reports that about 1,100 of its citizens were lost in the quake and another 4,000 injured. It is estimated that of the city's 36,000 dwellings, 80 percent have been destroyed or must be pulled down. Practically all of the public buildings and schools were demolished or badly damaged. At the time of the quake, Skopje had a population of approximately 200,000. Many thousands now are reported to be living in tents or in other temporary shelters.