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FIGHTING THE BATTLE OF WORLD HUNGER

The following excerpts are from an address by Mr. Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs, at the Young World Food and Development Seminar in Toronto on September 15:

...Despite billions of dollars spent on foreign aid and gifts of food, despite the energy and dedication of such organizations as the Freedom-from-Hunger Campaign, and despite years of activity by all the international agencies which have applied themselves to this field, the fact remains that there are more hungry mouths in the world today than ever before in history.

Malnutrition is the dark angel which hovers today over millions of young children in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It appears before their birth and carries them to an early grave, with hunger their constant companion in the years between. Famine strikes all too frequently upon the plains of Asia. We can admire the fact that hungry nations have made progress in the last 20 years; were they not handicapped by crippling difficulties, they could take great forward strides.

The statistics of the world food crisis read like a gospel of despair. We have been told that more lives will be lost through starvation in the next ten years than in all the wars of history. More than a fifth of the 2,200 million inhabitants of the developing countries are hungry and more than half suffer from malnutrition. Grain stocks, once considered excessive in certain major exporting countries such as Canada, have been drawn down drastically in the past five years and are now deemed to be at minimal levels. If present trends are not altered, the 13 developing countries with major cereals shortages

could experience a cereals deficit of as much as 30 million tons a year by the mid-1970s. These nations, already suffering chronic balance of payments deficits, might have to spend \$7.5 billion in foreign exchange in 1975 to import foodstuffs, with a consequent slowing-down in significant areas of economic development.

Statistical surveys, based upon total food produced per person, suggest that there is no worldwide shortage of food in terms of calories or protein at the moment.

But in the developing countries, where two-thirds of the world's people live, there is overwhelming evidence of undernutrition and malnutrition.

The world's increasingly serious nutritional problem arises from the uneven distribution of the food supply among countries, within countries and among families with different levels of income.

HUMAN ORGANIZATION DEFECTIVE

The conclusion is inescapable. The deficiency is one of human organization. The people of our world need leadership to escape from the vicious bonds of hunger.

We have the land. With imaginative schemes of irrigation and flood control, with the application of fertilizer and the latest advances in technology, millions of acres can be brought into fruitful production.

We have limitless possibilities for technical advance — in developing the immense resources of the sea, new cereal strains, herds and flocks that give more meat, more milk.