



NEWS from
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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

NUTRITION SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING

April 30, 1979

A decade ago our nation was shocked when the Field Foundation report brought us the message that some Americans are starving. We heard and saw on television that the incidence of poverty is not limited to developing countries, but that it also flourishes in the wealthiest country in the world. We knew before the report that there were poor persons in our country, but we did not really admit that some American children know nothing but hunger. Or, that rice and beans appear on both breakfast and supper menus for days at a time.

After the report on hunger became accepted, the Congress began to view our food programs as not simply an outlet for surplus commodities, but as programs having the possibility of addressing nutrition problems. When the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs was first created, we did not know if we could resolve the hunger problem and meet the nutritional needs of American citizens. I think it was perhaps at that time that Congress recognized for the first time its responsibility in this area and admitted it could not leave this matter unattended.

We began with the belief that we could make a difference. It is encouraging to learn that the Field Foundation has gone back to check on poverty and that it has discovered that hunger in American has been reduced. Congressionally mandated food assistance programs appear to have brought about this improvement. One reason we have made such progress can be attributed to the strong bipartisan support behind the goal of eradicating hunger. President Nixon highlighted hunger in his 1969 White House Conference on Food, and I feel we could not have made the improvements in the 1977 Food Stamp Act were it not for the help of the Carter Administration. When the Senate faced some difficult questions on funding for the Food Stamp Program during consideration of the fiscal year 1980 First Concurrent Budget Resolution, it was bipartisan support that decided the question in favor of a strong food stamp program.

I look forward to continuing this Subcommittee's work, and am appreciative of the support that persons here have given us. The leadership of the Field Foundation and of today's witnesses will continue to be valuable to the Senate. Later this year we will be looking at the Food Stamp Act, and it is almost certain we will encounter efforts to curtail this program. I trust that today we will hear facts, theories, and trends that will assist us when this legislation next comes before the Senate.