

available each year for this purpose. We have a problem in connection with this in that we are now reimbursing the local units at the rate of 4½ cents per meal which is, of course, insufficient to provide an adequate and satisfactory meal.

As evident from the calls that we have been receiving and reports from school administrators, there is concern about the financial status of many programs. As of the end of the last school year, June 30, 32 percent of the programs were operating in the red. Over 60 percent of all the programs had less than \$500 on hand. The situation has been affected adversely by increases in prices of food and more particularly by a drastic cut in the amount and kinds of donated foods. The value of these foods averaged 32.34 percent less this past year than the preceding year.

These programs cannot be allowed to drift deeper into deficit operation. More revenue is necessary but prices to children cannot be increased to offset these deficits unless the program is to be available only to the economically advantaged children and this, of course, would be contrary to what we have been trying to do with other programs.

The only solution in sight, unless there should be an increase in the Federal appropriation, is for school districts to provide additional support which, in turn, however, will tend to react unfavorably on appropriations for instructional purposes.

We would like to see the Federal appropriation equal to meeting the 9 cents per meal at which the program started out years ago, or somewhere nearer that 9-cent level.

The State has been hard pressed for funds for administration and supervision of these two programs. It is strongly recommended that an allowance of Federal funds be made for administrative purposes as is done in some of the other programs. This is similar to the recommendation on Public Laws 874 and 815.

The next major act is the National Defense Education Act. It would be an understatement to say that this has been of great value to the department of education and the schools of Maine.

I would point out that it has enabled the State to perform some of the supervisory and leadership functions which have been recognized as needed for many years and recommended to various legislatures but could not be accomplished because of lack of funds.

With respect to titles administered in full or in part by the State department, title II, student loans, I think perhaps you have heard testimony this morning about this area. Maine is ranked as 50th among the States in those going to post-secondary-educational institutions and has a real problem in this respect.

This title has enabled many students to enter and remain in the five State colleges. I mention the five State colleges because they are the ones that are under the jurisdiction of the department and the State board. And they are dedicated to the preparation of teachers. And with a serious shortage of teachers this has had some beneficial effect. It has not been large but has been very helpful.

Title III, the strengthening of instruction in various subject matter fields. The Federal funds have made it possible to employ long-needed State supervisors in science, mathematics, modern foreign language, and we have recommended these in the past, English, the social studies, and reading.