

Mr. QUIE. So you don't need OEO to step in and help you with the programs you are presently operating but you need them to fill in the gaps?

Secretary FREEMAN. To fill in the gaps in some programs we operate. OEO would not be particularly helpful in the soil conservation program or in the ASCS commodity-operated program. We would like help from OEO in housing where we don't have funding for grants in poor areas.

Certainly, the OEO program delegation for loans has been extremely helpful and important and the general contribution in mobilizing the community in helping to organize the community and to bring new people and new and creative ideas into it have been extremely helpful.

Mr. QUIE. May I ask one last question, Mr. Chairman?

Do you need help from OEO in the feeding program? I would like to have you comment on why so many people seem to be starving in Mississippi according to the press reports we are receiving, when the Department of Agriculture has a direct distribution program and the Food Stamp program.

Secretary FREEMAN. The food programs are not adequate. There are malnourished people in this country and there is no question about it. We have been in the process of expanding these programs as rapidly as we could. The feeding programs are not only a matter of making food available. They are equally a matter of making it possible for this food to be used in the most effective manner.

So, in terms of getting information to people about the programs, in terms of getting people to sign up in the program, in terms of getting people to participate in the program, in terms of getting people to have adequate education to use the resources, in these areas we do need and welcome OEO help.

Mr. QUIE. Why hasn't the Extension Service been educating these people with respect to these programs? That is their main purpose.

Secretary FREEMAN. You are right, but they have not reached out to really get to the poor people on the basis they should. It has been partly a matter of inadequate funding, of personnel, and I think I must say quite honestly, it has been a matter of not zeroing in on this problem as the Extension Service should have done.

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. Secretary, I think your statement is unusually good. I have just some general comments.

First of all, I am impressed much by the breadth of your work and by the obvious effort that you have made to coordinate those programs available to you with the programs of OEO.

I agree quite thoroughly with Mrs. Green and the others who have stated that perhaps we ought to investigate thoroughly to see if possibly we can put a more realistic ceiling on the amount the poor can earn.

At best, even those who own their own homes and have paid off their mortgages and are relying on social security and perhaps even a modest pension from another source have a terrible time getting along.

If this committee has jurisdiction or could do it, I would think it would be an extremely wise thing for us to study the feasibility of