

Mr. HAWKINS. Perhaps I can rephrase it a little better. It would seem to me that people living in rural areas are much more isolated than those who live in urban areas and, consequently, for any single Federal agency to render a service on its own would involve an administrative expense first of all which would necessarily be duplicated by every other Federal agency.

Consequently, it would seem to me in the case of the rural CAP that would involve not one but many, many counties, and that because of this it would be almost impossible to try to fragment the service and render the type of service that you are now rendering through a coordinated agency.

Secretary FREEMAN. I would certainly agree. We could not possibly have an office for every Federal department for every county in the United States.

Mr. HAWKINS. But you can find it economical to share in the cost, let's say, along with other Federal agencies.

Secretary FREEMAN. That is correct, and the whole concept of the CAP agency and the TAP groups within the Department of Agriculture is to have this outreach so that you can use people presently on the spot to provide a conduit and in many cases provide actual staff help for departments and programs that are not staffed in that locality.

Mr. HAWKINS. With respect to the situation referred to in Mississippi, the implication was left that because of certain sensational stories about people starving that pressure was put on the OEO and the OEO in turn had to somehow put the pressure on you. If I can recall, was it not a request of a cooperative relationship that existed between the Department of Agriculture and OEO that brought what little relief was brought to these people?

Secretary FREEMAN. Yes, it was. We have been expanding the food program and the food stamp program for the last 6 years until now it reaches every county.

That is not to say it reaches everyone in the county. There have been some counties that did not put a program into effect because they said they didn't have any money and could not afford to pay the administrative costs. In those cases we approached OEO who came in and picked up the tab for some of the administrative costs in those counties.

Conversely, when we have had some question in terms of the proper level of the food stamp program in regard to the amount of money people were spending for food and certain people with intermittent or very low incomes did not have funds available, OEO came in and made arrangements for a loan to these people so they could qualify under this program, so it is a very good example of cooperation.

I want to hasten to say that this program has not reached everyone. It is going to require more funding, it is going to require more resources, it is going to require more emphasis and it is going to require more coordination to reach the essential diet, which had been gradual.

Up to 6 years ago we didn't have a food program and now we have 1,600,000 people on the food stamp program. Six years ago we didn't have anyone working on this program. Now we have 700 throughout the United States.

I am not satisfied but I think we have made some progress and if