

no provision for providing free stamps to families who have no income or available cash, although such families have no "normal expenditures for food" and legislative history of the Act clearly indicates that such persons should receive the stamps free.

Despite the designation of 255 counties as "Hunger Counties" by the Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States and the well-publicized documentation of the extreme deprivation which exists in many areas of the country and which amounts to a chronic condition of emergency, the Secretary of Agriculture has not made use of the power given him the Food Stamp Act to authorize the concurrent operation of the food stamp program and the surplus commodity program in these areas, although the congressional debate surrounding this provision of the bill makes clear that such power was to be exercised in areas of economic need where persons could not afford to buy food stamps.¹⁰

As noted earlier, the Commission found that many needy families depend on surplus commodities as their major source of food. The commodities currently distributed do not provide nutritionally-adequate diets. Secretary Freeman has indicated that he has the power to spend Section 32 funds to increase the variety of commodities distributed to the needy. Yet, he has returned to the United States Treasury in the last ten years over \$902 million in unused Section 32 funds and plans to return \$228,616,000 this year. The Secretary gave the following explanation for his return of Section 32 funds in a May 27, 1968 letter to the Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee: "The only way in which the Section 32 funds could have been used would have been to add to the variety of commodities being distributed in counties which had programs. While this would have been desirable, it was not judged to be crucial to the food program."

Secretary Freeman has contended that the only use he can make of Section 32 funds is to purchase surplus commodities and provide for their distribution. He claims that Section 32 funds cannot be used to add nutritious nonsurplus commodities to the program. The language of the Section and its legislative history do not support such a restrictive interpretation. In any event, even under the Secretary's reading of the act, Section 32 funds could be used to improve distribution procedures for the commodities in order to increase participation in the program.¹¹

II. WELFARE

Just as government food programs have failed to provide the poor with sufficient food, public assistance programs have failed to provide the poor with a decent standard of living.

Mrs. Pattie Mae Haynes and her six children live in a three-room house that has no electricity or indoor plumbing. Since the roof in two of the rooms leaks, the family cooks and sleeps in one room. Mrs. Haynes is 43 years old and in ill health. The Haynes' family does not have an outhouse and must use the woods behind the house. Water for household chores and for drinking comes from a polluted spring 100 yards from the house down a steep hill. There are only one or two chairs in the house and the children must eat their meals on the floor. Mrs. Haynes often has to keep her children home from school because they do not have shoes. Mrs. Haynes and her family receive \$117 a month in welfare payments.

Mrs. Rebecca Ward has 11 children and grandchildren living with her and works as a maid five hours a day, six days a week for \$12. Because she has a \$12 weekly income, Mrs. Ward gets \$26 a month in welfare payments. Mrs. Ward testified that her children do not attend school regularly:

"... I have got four staying out all this year because they didn't have shoes and clothes to wear, and I wasn't able to [buy them any] because I wasn't making but \$12 a week, and I had to try to clothe them and feed them."

Of the 23,891 persons receiving public assistance in the 16-county hearing area, 77.5% are Negro. 91.5% of the persons receiving Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) in the hearing area are Negro. ADC is available to children who are deprived of the care and support of one or both parents by reason of death, illness, or

¹⁰ The institution of commodity programs in these additional counties would not necessitate the discontinuance of commodity programs in other counties since for the past 10 years the Secretary has not used all the Section 32 funds available to him.

¹¹ For example, mobile distribution units that travel to various parts of a county would help to overcome the transportation problems that presently discourage participation. In addition, increased use could be made of local private organizations as distributors of the commodities.