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# THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

## Background and Development

by Gordon W. Gunderson<sup>1</sup>

School food service programs such as we have in 1971 did not just happen over-night nor even during the past decade. Preceding today's programs is a long history of more than a hundred years of development, of testing and evaluating, and of constant research to provide the best in nutrition, nutrition education, and food service for the nation's millions of children in school.

### EARLY EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE

Though various efforts at school food services were carried on in this country as far back as the 1890's, some European countries were operating rather extensive programs a hundred years before.

In 1790 a combined program of teaching and feeding hungry, vagrant children was begun in Munich, Germany, by Benjamin Thompson, known also as Count Rumford. An American born physicist and statesman, he spent his early years in New England. During the Revolutionary War he became distrusted because of his activities and contacts with royalists, and in 1784 went to England and from there he traveled to Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. While in Munich he established

the Poor People's Institute, involving a program under which poor, unemployed adults were required to work for clothing and food by making clothing for the army. The children were also required to work part time in the forenoon and afternoon. During the hours between their work schedules they were taught, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The food served to children and adults consisted mainly of soup made from potatoes, barley, and peas. Meat was not included in the diet because of its high cost. Because of a lack of adequate funding for his projects, Count Rumford was constantly seeking to develop meals which would provide the best nutrition at the lowest possible cost.

His assistance in developing public mass feeding was sought by many countries, and he established large programs in England, Germany, Scotland, France and Switzerland.

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<sup>1</sup> for Gordon W Gunderson, a native of Wisconsin, was elected in the fall of 1939 to represent the U S Department of Agriculture to supervise its program in Wisconsin of distributing donated commodities to establish school lunch programs During World War II his duties also included the administration of war food programs in the State.

Upon passage of the National School Lunch Act in 1946 he was elected to administrate the school lunch program for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. He was also the administrator of the commodity distribution program for schools, institutions, needy households, summer camp, and other eligible outlets. The Special Milk Program was inaugurated in 1954 and was added to his supervision.

Mr Gunderson retired on December 31, 1969 after serving over 30 years in the development and expansion of the school food service program in Wisconsin

In London, for example, 60,000 persons were fed daily from Count Rumford's soup kitchen. Such large operations challenged him to develop more efficient food preparation facilities, and he is credited with having invented the double boiler, kitchen range, baking oven, fire-less cooker, pressure cooker and drip coffee pot, all of them being forerunners of the steam jacketed kettle, compartment steamer, and commercial ovens used so extensively in school food service programs today.<sup>2</sup>

### **Germany**

In 1875, needy children were supplied free text-books, clothing and food by The Philanthropic School Society in Hamburg. Similar societies sprang up in other cities as well. Privately funded societies for the special purpose of school feeding were organized later, the "Society for Feeding Needy School Children" at Dresden in 1880 being one of the first. However, these were not as extensive as the school societies subsidized by the cities.

A departure from the school feeding program in Germany was the organization and operation of "Vacation Colonies." Under this program, sickly and weak children from crowded areas of cities were given a vacation in the country for a few weeks each summer. The programs were sponsored mostly by teachers and doctors. The work and accomplishments of the vacation colonies was discussed at their convention held in Leipzig in 1890.

This was followed by an investigation into the need for school feeding under the backing of the government. A report of the investigation was published in 1896. There were at that time 79 cities operating school feeding programs. The report stimulated such widespread interest that in 1897 a bill was introduced in the Reichstag which would have provided for school meals in all cities. The

bill was defeated on the representation that its passage would cause an influx of people to the cities. Nevertheless, it encouraged expansion of school feeding by local societies subsidized by city governments. One survey indicated school feeding was carried on by 239 cities of 10,000 population or over, and 189 cities reported feeding a total of 111,000 children or about 6 percent of the school population.

A great Frenchman, Victor Hugo, while exiled in Guernsey in 1865, provided the funds for hot meals for children in a nearby school. Six years later, "The Society for People's Kitchens in the Public Schools" was established in Angers, France. The objective was to furnish meals at school to children who were unable to pay. A two-cent charge was made to those who could pay.

In 1849, the battalion of the National Guard in the second district in Paris turned over a surplus fund in its treasury to district authorities to form a nucleus for an organization that was to help poor children get a schooling. In 1862, another district adopted the plan, and in 1867 the value of such funding had become so evident that the school law passed that year contained a section authorizing the establishment of school funds in every commune in France.

The statutes provided for use of the funds for sharing in medical inspection, school lunches, provision for holidays, excursions, vacation schools and whatever special services the local school authorities might deem essential to the welfare of the children. As early as 1867, Victor Duray, then minister of public instruction, had requested school officials to give special attention to the nutrition of the children. This resulted in establishing school lunch programs for needy children in about 464 places.

Paris began school canteens in 1877, providing meals at public expense for children whose parents' names were on the Poor Board list. Two years later, the city council voted to support the program and canteens were set up in every school district. Initially, a part of the support was derived from local sources.

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<sup>2</sup> Sarnuel C Brown, "Count kumford Phvsicist Ertraordinarv," Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Co, Inc

However, the city subsidy was increased from year to year until the total cost was at city expense.

Teachers supervised the lunch programs but required extra pay for their services 25 cents per day.

Participation was open to all children, regardless of ability to pay. Those who could pay were charged an amount equal to the cost of the food. Cost of equipment and labor was not included. The anonymity of children receiving free meals was fully protected through a system of lunch ticket sales. Children who could pay were required to do so, and identical tickets were given free of charge to the children who could not pay.

In the school year 1908-09, there were 853 canteens in the schools of Paris supplying meals to 588 schools with 38,531 children participating. Thirty-two percent of the meals were paid for, the remaining 68 percent being served free. The average cost per meal was 3.5 cents and the average charge per meal to paying students was 2.9 cents. Outside of Paris, a 1909 report showed 2,867 canteens in operation in France, serving lunches to 147,974 children.

## England

In England the passage in 1905 of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act was the culmination of the efforts of 365 private, charitable organizations in attempting to provide meals at school for needy children, and a reflection of national concern over the physical condition of the populace. Shortly before the close of the Boer War, the country became aroused over a statement by Major-General Frederick Maurice that three out of every five men seeking enlistment in the army were found to be physically unfit. Shortly after the statement had been published, the King appointed The Royal Commission . on Physical Training to study the programs of physical training in schools and to determine what ought to be done to improve the national physique and thus build up the army.

The Commission came to the conclusion that "among the causes which tell against the physical welfare of the population, the lack of proper nourishment is one of the most serious," and that "the question of the proper and sufficient feeding of children is one which has the closest possible connection with any scheme which may be adopted for their physical and equally for their mental work." <sup>3</sup> A recommendation was made for the establishment of school lunches for which the children would pay a small fee.

The following year, a new committee was appointed to determine the reason for the deteriorating of the race, if this were actually the case. Sixty-eight witnesses, including 37 physicians, were consulted. The recommendations of this committee were the same -the need to provide adequate meals at school. A third committee made further studies, and finally a fourth committee confirmed the reports of previous commissions and committees and the Provision of Meals Act was passed by Parliament in December 1905. The Act provided that "When the local education authority . . . resolve that any of the children in attendance at any public elementary school within their area are unable by reason of lack of food to take full advantage of the education provided them, the local education authority shall take such steps as they think fit to provide for such children, under such regulations and conditions as the local education authority may prescribe (including if they so resolve, the making of a charge to recover the cost from the parent or guardian), such food as the local education authority may consider requisite to enable the said children to take full advantage of the education provided for them" .<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Louise Stevens Bryant, *School Feeding: Its History and Practice at Home and Abroad*, Philadelphia and London, J. B. Lippincott 1913, p 22.

<sup>4</sup> A Bill to Amend the Education Act of 1902, Provision of Meals Act of 1905, British Parliamentary Papers, 1905 (132) i-p 485.

The circular sent out to schools by the National Board of Education concerning the intent of the Act stated, among other things ". . . and it aims at securing that for this purpose suitable meals shall be available just as much for those whose parents are in a position to pay as for those to whom food must be given free of cost."<sup>5</sup>

Medical inspection was added to the program in 1907, and the serving of meals through vacation periods was authorized in 1914. In 1934 appropriations to the Milk Marketing Board provided milk to school children free of charge or at a price of one-half penny per 1/3 pint. In the 1938-39 school year nearly 700,000 British children received free meals, representing about 95 percent of the ordinary meals served. Sixty-five percent of the milk served was free.<sup>6</sup>

### **Holland**

By royal decree in 1900, Holland authorized municipalities to supply food and clothing to public or private school children who were unable, because of the lack of food and clothes, to go regularly to school or to those who probably would not continue to attend school regularly unless food and clothes were provided. Thus Holland became the first country to adopt national legislation specifically to provide school lunches.

### **Switzerland**

In Switzerland lunches were provided to about 8 percent of the primary school children by private societies. This was done to encourage attendance by children who lived long distances from school and could not go home for the noon-day meal. An investigation

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<sup>5</sup> Louise Stevens Bryant, *School Feeding: Its History and Practice at Home and Abroad*, Philadelphia and London, J. B. Lippincott, 1913, PP 44-45.

<sup>6</sup> The School Lunch Program and Agricultural Surplus Disposal, The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, USDA, Miscellaneous Publication No. 467, October 1941.

was made into the situation by one Dr. Huber. He found that teachers supported school feeding enthusiastically because of better attendance, improved attention, and better scholastic work by the children. Dr. Huber's findings and recommendations resulted in a national order being issued in 1903 making it an obligation on the part of municipalities to furnish food and clothing to children in need. Consequently the program grew rapidly, and in 1906 the use of State funds was authorized for this purpose. However, the amount of local support could not be reduced because of the receipt of state funds.

Dr. F. Erismann of Zurich made a study of school lunches throughout Switzerland and found them to be generally inadequate in protein and fat. Among his four recommendations for management and improvement of the meals is the following: "The school lunch should be a full nourishing meal. The portions should have enough food value to furnish 816 calories or one-half the day's required total of calories per child. It should be especially rich in protein and fat and the food values should be distributed in about the following amounts: 40 grams protein, 26 grams fat, 100 grams carbohydrate for a ten-year-old child. Proper variety should be insisted on."<sup>7</sup>

### **Other European Cities**

By the early 1900's, school feeding had spread throughout most of the European countries. In Milan and San Remo, Italy, meals had been furnished during the 1890's and the responsibility was taken over by the municipalities. By 1914 some 50 Italian cities were conducting some kind of school feeding programs. In Austria, Sweden, Belgium,

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<sup>7</sup> Louise Stevens Bryant, *School Feeding: Its History and Practice at Home and Abroad*, Philadelphia and London, J. B. Lippincott, 1913, p 137.

Denmark and Norway programs were underway.<sup>8</sup>

Norway's "Oslo Breakfast" was a new venture in school feeding in Norway, although Christiania (Oslo) had been providing noon-day meals since 1897. The Oslo Breakfast consisted of: 1/2 pint milk, whole meal bread, cheese, 1/2 orange and 1/2 apple. From September to March, one dose of cod-liver oil was included. This program spread to other parts of Scandinavia very rapidly, and was tried out in London as an experiment to determine its effect upon 130 children from poor families entitled to free meals. Said Professor J. C. Drummond of London University: "The effects have been remarkable." Children were free from the usual skin complaints, and boys gained in height 26 percent more than those not participating in the experiment.<sup>9</sup>

## **EARLY PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES**

In spite of information available from the vast experience and progress made in most of the nations of Europe, school feeding in the United States underwent the same evolution as in Europe, beginning with sporadic food services undertaken by private societies and associations interested in child welfare and education. The Children's Aid Society of New York initiated a program in 1853, serving meals to students attending the vocational school. However, it did not gain sufficient momentum to convince other organizations or municipalities to do likewise.<sup>10</sup>

There can be no doubt that *Poverty*, a 1904

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<sup>8</sup> Marjorie L Scott, *School Feeding: Its Contribution to Child Nutrition*, Rome, Italy, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, November, 1908.

<sup>9</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, London, July 22, 1039, p.299.

<sup>10</sup> *School Lunches*, Yearbook Separate No, 3004 U.S. Department of Agriculture, p. 692.

book by Robert Hunter, had a strong influence upon the U.S. effort to feed hungry, needy children in school.

Hunter was vitally concerned with hunger, particularly among the children in poor families. ". . . but the poverty of any family is likely to be most serious at the very time when the children most need nurture, when they are most dependent, and when they are obtaining the only education which they are ever to receive. Guidance and supervision of the parents are impossible because they must work; the nurture is insufficient because there are too many hungry mouths to feed; learning is difficult because hungry stomachs and languid bodies and thin blood are not able to feed the brain. The lack of learning among so many poor children is certainly due, to an important extent, to this cause. There must be thousands -very likely sixty or seventy thousand children-in New York City alone who often arrive at school hungry and unfitted to do well the work required. It is utter folly, from the point of view of learning, to have a compulsory school law which compels children, in that weak physical and mental state which results from poverty, to drag themselves to school and to sit at their desks, day in and day out, for several years, learning little or nothing. If it is a matter of principle in democratic America that every child shall be given a certain amount of instruction, let us render it possible for them to receive it, as monarchical countries have done, by making full and adequate provision for the physical needs of the children who come from the homes of poverty."<sup>11</sup>

## **Philadelphia**

Toward the turn of the century significant efforts at school feeding were evidenced almost simultaneously in Philadelphia and Boston.

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Hunter, *Poverty: Social Conscience in the Progressive Era*, Harper h Row, New York, Evanston and London, 1965, p. 217.

In Philadelphia, the Starr Center Association began serving penny lunches in one school in 1894, later expanding the service to another. Soon a lunch committee was established within the Home and School League, and lunches were extended to include nine schools in the city.

Dr. Cheesman A. Herrick, who was principal of the William Penn High School for Girls when it first opened in 1909, is credited with accomplishing the transfer of responsibilities for operation and support of the lunch program from charitable organizations to the Philadelphia School Board. He requested that a system be established to assure that the lunches served would be based upon sound principles of nutrition and required that the program be under the direction of a home economics graduate. The Board granted his request on an experimental basis and on the condition that the program would be self-supporting. The experiment proved successful, and the following year lunch services were extended to the Southern Manual Training School and later to three additional units.

In the spring of 1912, the School Board established a Department of High School Lunches and- directed that the food services be inaugurated in all the high schools of the city. During all this time the Home and School League had continued operating the feeding program in the nine elementary schools, and continued to do so until May of 1915, when it reported to the Board that the need for a lunch system had been clearly demonstrated and that it could not be successfully operated by an organization outside the school system. As a result, the School Board placed the operation of both high school and elementary lunch programs under the supervision of the Department of High School Lunches and authorized the extension of the program to other elementary schools. Under the Herrick plan, light, heat, cooking gas and the original equipment were supplied by the Board.

Otherwise, the program was to be self-supporting.<sup>12</sup>

### **Boston**

Early programs in Boston were inaugurated under the auspices of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. According to a report of the Union's activities in 1908, the organization had begun serving hot lunches in September of that year to high schools which were under the supervision of the Boston School Committee. A central kitchen system was used and lunches were transported to the participating schools. There was a school lunch advisory committee which set the policy for the program and actual administration of the program was in the hands of a lunchroom superintendent and a director of school lunches.<sup>13</sup>

An experimental program for elementary schools was begun in January 1910, taking the form of a mid-morning lunch prepared by the class in Home Economics three days each week. On two days of each week sandwiches and milk were served. The children ate their meals at their desks, there being no lunchroom in the building.

Before the end of the school year (1909-1910) five additional schools were benefiting from the program, and a total of 2,000 pupils were being served each day, according to a report submitted by Ellen H. Richards in the "Journal of Home Economics" for December 1910. She stated further that "The teachers are unanimous in the belief that the luncheons are helping the children both physically and mentally. They are more attentive and interested in the lessons during the last hour of the morning and the result in their recitations gives the proof."

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<sup>12</sup> Emma Smedley, *The School Lunch: Its Organization and Management in Philadelphia*, Smedley, 1920.

<sup>13</sup> Marion Cronan, *The School Lunch*, Peoria, Illinois, Charles A. Bennett, Inc., 1962.

## Milwaukee

In 1904, the same year that *Poverty* was published, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, began its efforts at meeting the need when the Women's School Alliance of Wisconsin began furnishing lunches to children in three centers located in areas where both parents were working and the greatest need was evident. The project was supported by donations from private individuals, churches, societies and clubs. The lunches were prepared in the homes of women who lived near the schools and were willing to cook and serve the meals. Improvement in attendance and scholarship was noted, and six additional centers were in operation by 1910.

The preparation and serving of the lunches had by that time been transferred to the school buildings and a matron was employed at each school. The price of the meal was one cent for children who could pay, and they were served all the soup and rolls they could eat. Those who could not pay received their lunches free. The Alliance recognized the need for establishing additional centers throughout the city, but it was unable to raise the necessary funds for their support. The county board was requested to assume support of the school feeding program, but the proposal failed, it being the contention of the board that such action would encourage parents to be indolent and shift parental responsibilities to the municipality.<sup>14</sup>

## School Feeding Supported

In the year following the publication of Hunter's *Poverty*, there appeared another, similar publication dealing with poverty and the plight of poverty-stricken families. This was John Spargo's *The Bitter Cry of the Children*. Like Hunter, Spargo dwelt extensively upon the misfortunes of children and the effect of malnourishment upon their physical and mental well-being. He estimated,

after very careful study, that "not less than 2,000,000 children of school age in the United States are the victims of poverty which denies them common necessities, particularly adequate nourishment.... Such children are in very many cases incapable of successful mental effort, and much of our national expenditure for education is in consequence an absolute waste."<sup>15</sup>

The introduction to *The Bitter Cry of the Children* was supplied by none other than Robert Hunter, the author of *Poverty*. In commenting upon Mr. Spargo's publication, he states, "Few of us sufficiently realize the powerful effect upon life of adequate nutritious food. Few of us ever think of how much it is responsible for our physical and mental advancement or what a force it has been in forwarding our civilized life." Mr. Spargo's emphasis upon the importance and appropriateness of feeding the school child is borne out in the following quotations from his book: "To the contention that society, having assumed the responsibility of insisting that every child shall be educated, and providing the means of education, is necessarily bound to assume the responsibility of seeing that they are made fit to receive that education, so far as possible, there does not seem to be any convincing answer. It will be objected that for society to do this would mean the destruction of the responsibility of the parents. That is obviously true. But it is equally true of education itself, the responsibility for which society has assumed. Some individualists there are who contend that society is wrong in doing this, and their opposition to the proposal that it should undertake to provide the children with food is far more logical than that of those who believe that society should assume the responsibility of educating the child, but not that of equipping it with the necessary physical basis for that education."

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<sup>14</sup> Mrs. Duane Mowry, *Pennv Lunches in Milwaukee Schools*, American City 4 (6), p. 283-288.

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<sup>15</sup> John Spargo. *The Bitter Cry of the Children*, Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1906, p.117.

## **New York**

Robert Hunter had estimated that there were sixty or seventy thousand school children in New York who were not capable of doing good school work because of malnourishment. As has been previously noted, the situation had no doubt been recognized by the Children's Aid Society of New York as far back as 1853. In that year they began serving lunches to students at a vocational school. No significant programs in the public schools developed, however, until 1908 when Dr. William H. Maxwell, superintendent of schools, made a special plea in his report to the Board of Education. "Again I appeal to you, in the name of suffering childhood, to establish in each school facilities whereby the pupils may obtain simple wholesome food at cost price."

A school lunch committee consisting of physicians and social workers was thereupon organized to find out whether a lunch might be self supporting at a 3-cent charge to students. Two schools were selected on a trial basis. Two years later the board authorized expansion of the program to other schools of the city and agreed that the board would pay the cost of equipment and gas and supply the necessary rooms. The cost of food and labor was to be met from the sale of lunches.

During this period height and weight measurements were generally used and recognized as standards in determining nutritional adequacies. Consequently such records were maintained for 143 children for three months in the New York school lunch experiment. Records were also maintained on 81 children who did not participate in the lunch program. It was found that the 143 children had gained 91 pounds 4 ounces, or an average of 10.2 ounces each, while the 81 children gained 17 pounds or an average of 3.4 ounces. In both groups some children had lost weight, but the proportion of those who had lost weight was less among those eating the school lunches than among those who did not. This was considered as proof of the

beneficial effects of one good planned meal each day at school.

Until January 1920, lunches in the elementary schools of New York had been supported by volunteer social organizations. In the 1919-20 school year, the Board of Education assumed full responsibility for all programs in Manhattan and the Bronx, and in the following year for all the programs.

## **Cleveland**

Elementary school lunch service began in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 6, 1909, when the Cleveland Federation of Women's Clubs began serving breakfasts to 19 children at the Eagle School. One additional school was added in 1910, and by 1915 meals were being provided for all special classes in the grade schools, excepting the school for the deaf. In total about 710 children were being provided for each day.

School lunch services in Cleveland took on a unique aspect. The Board of Education furnished the equipment and provided the lunchrooms. However, "For crippled and open air children the Federation of Women's Clubs provides food and at each school employs a woman to prepare it. For the blind, the Society for Promoting the Interests of the Blind takes charge. The committees, in consultation with principal, medical inspector, and supervisor of high school lunches, make out the different menus. The Board of Education contracts with these committees to furnish meals to exceptional children in specified schools at so much per child per day, according to the kind and number of meals supplied.<sup>16</sup>

In some schools the meals were served at 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m., and the children went home for their noon lunch. In other schools the lunches were served at noon. Apparently "open air" children received the two lunches each day, and the noon meal was

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<sup>16</sup> Alice C. Bouhton, Household Arts and School Lunches, Cleveland Education Survey 1915, pp. 121-122.

supplied for the blind and crippled children who did not go home at noon.

The meal generally consisted of "bread and jam and a hot dish, such as beef stew, minced meat with potatoes, thick soup, or macaroni with tomato sauce. A few, on order from the medical inspector, get milk in the morning".<sup>17</sup> In the summer of 1909, lunchrooms were installed in seven high schools in Cleveland. For 16 years prior to this, lunches had been provided by "lunch wagons" going to the schools or by stores in the vicinity serving hot meals at noon. In some schools the "basket lunches" were served on the school premises by caterers. Even after the installation of lunchrooms and equipment in the seven high schools, the operations in the schools were actually conducted by the former caterers under contract with the Board of Education on a concessionaire basis.

In the contract the Board of Education agreed to furnish all the necessary equipment, as well as heat, light, gas and water, sufficient for the proper maintenance of the lunchrooms, and to replace all equipment rendered useless through natural wear and tear.

In 1914-15 the normal school and all high schools except two were provided with lunch services. This involved a total of 6,715 students. All items served were priced a la carte and a typical "menu" offered a selection from about 15 items, including milk. "In some schools the range of choice is too great, in others too small. In all it is uneven. Vegetable soup is always vegetable soup and the price is 4 cents; but price is the only constant factor, for the materials used vary from school to school. That is, a nickel will buy more food, often of better quality, in one school than it will in another."<sup>18</sup>

Milk was furnished to all schools by one dairy selected by the lunchroom supervisor.

"All other supplies are chosen by the individual concessionaires, who are entirely responsible for the service. In a number of schools they prepare the food themselves, which increases their difficulties for they are frequently interrupted by trades people, by lunchroom helpers asking questions, by stray students who need attention, and by teachers on diet who want beef juice or an eggnog, or by other teachers who have a free hour and want a special meal. Lunch has to be prepared in between these demands and dishes are sometimes ready long before the regular lunch period."<sup>19</sup>

Naturally, concessionaires had no guaranteed, minimum income. During the 1914-15 school year, concessionaire's profits ranged from \$942 in one school to as little as \$124 in another. The median for 10 schools was \$605. The comments of a survey committee concerning the "Place of Lunch Service in the School System" is worthy of special note: "School lunches meet a natural need of all children. The purpose of the service is to teach children to choose wisely the food they buy. The conduct of school lunches is a business, an art, and a science.... The Superintendent of Lunches should have the same rank as the director of any other special division and be compensated accordingly. She should be subordinate to the educational department, for her work bears a direct relation to all health teaching in the schools and offers an opportunity to teach children the ethics and economies of spending, and various factors affecting the price of school meals and restaurant meals."<sup>20</sup> In the summary of its findings and recommendations the survey committee states, among other things. "The school lunch division should reach all children; it should provide wholesome and nutritious food for them at cost, train them in sane habits of eating, and

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., P. 126.

<sup>18</sup> Alice C. Boughton, Household Arts and School Lunches, Cleveland Education Survey 1915, pp. 145-146.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>20</sup> Alice C. Boughton, Household Arts and School Lunches, Cleveland Education Survey 1915, p. 162.

teach them to choose wisely what food they buy."<sup>21</sup>

### **Cincinnati**

Almost simultaneously with the installation of lunchrooms in Cleveland, civic and social organizations were preparing for serving penny lunches in at least one school in Cincinnati. Here, again, the school board furnished the equipment, excepting that the very first equipment was paid for from private donations.

Five food items were served every day, two of which were hot foods. Each item was sold for a penny. The following are samples of menu offerings: "1. Hot meat sandwich; baked sweet potato; oranges; candy balls; graham crackers. 2. Hot wieners; rice pudding in cones; candy; bananas; cakes." The salary of the cook was paid by the Council of Jewish Women. All other costs were met by lunchroom receipts.

### **St. Louis**

In St. Louis, five schools in congested areas of the city were selected for an experiment in school lunch services in October 1911. High schools already had some form of lunch service, but it was decided to expand the services to elementary schools primarily for poorly nourished children and for those children who could not go home at noon. About 900 children were participating in the five centers. At the outset the food was prepared at the Central High School kitchen and transported to the elementary schools. This was found to be excessively costly, however, and after a month's experience the preparation was transferred to each of the participating schools.

Originally the board purchased the food, but "It was decided, however, that it was illegal to spend public funds for the purchase of food

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<sup>21</sup>The findings and recommendation in the report contain no reference to provision of meals to children who were unable to pay.

and the board was obliged to abandon the work."<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the programs were required to be self-supporting aside from the cost of equipment, which was paid by the board.

### **Chicago**

According to the Department of Interior, Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 37, issued in 1921, "Chicago has the most intensive school lunch system in America." At that time, all the city's high schools and 60 elementary schools were carrying on school feeding programs as a full responsibility of the Chicago Board of Education. "Most of the high school children attend the lunchroom for part of their meal at least, and in the elementary schools approximately 31,000 children are served daily."

The program had its beginning in 1910, when the Chicago Board of Education authorized the expenditure of \$1,200 to begin an experimental program of serving hot lunches to children in six elementary schools.<sup>23</sup> By 1916, the number of elementary schools participating had grown to 28 and 31 high schools had joined the program.

### **Los Angeles**

Los Angeles had entered upon a fairly substantial program by 1921. The Board of Education sponsored the program in nine high schools, eight intermediate, and 31 elementary schools. The participation in high schools ranged from 450 to 1,800 students per day per school, in the intermediate school 700 to 1,000 per school, and in the elementary system approximately 120 pupils per day per school.

The programs in the high schools and intermediate schools were managed by student

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<sup>22</sup> Department of Interior, Bureau of Education Bulletin No 37, 1921, p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> School Feeding in the United States, FDPB, P&MA, USDA, June 1947.

body associations or by a cafeteria director selected from the Home Economics Department. The elementary schools selected for participation in the program had a high percentage of students needing the noonday lunch because of defective nutrition. The undernourished children were fed at noon and in some cases were given a snack at 10 a.m. Lunches were sold at cost, but were given free to those unable to pay. The deficit in the elementary program was taken care of by the P.T.A. In the high schools and intermediate schools students unable to pay for their lunches were given work in the Home Economics Department or in other areas in the school to pay for their meals.

In a 1918 survey by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, concerning school lunchroom services in 86 cities having over 50,000 population, it was found that only 25 percent of them provided lunch services in elementary schools, but that 76 percent had some form of lunch services in high schools. In high schools it was found that the noon lunch period was short and students came long distances to school. Some form of meal service was, therefore, considered essential. For the most part, elementary school children lived in the neighborhood of the school and could go home for their noonday meal. Improvement of nutrition was not a part of the consideration. Only five of the cities reporting lunchroom services in high schools indicated that the program had been instituted as a means of overcoming malnutrition among the students.

### **Rural Schools**

Nationally, rural schools had a special problem in attempting to establish warm noonday lunches for their pupils. Almost without exception there was no room available for setting up a kitchen and dining area. Children came to school from long distances, and their lunches at noon consisted mainly of cold sandwiches, many of them of questionable nutritive value.

Efforts were made beginning in the early 1900's to provide some means of warming certain foods brought from home or to prepare a hot food of some kind at school as a supplement to the foods brought from home. Public funds for such purposes were generally not available. But many ingenious teachers devised plans for preparing soups or similar hot dishes from meats and vegetables brought to school by pupils as a donation for the general use of all. Students took turns in helping to prepare the foods before the morning session began. Such dishes were cooked in a large kettle set on top of the stove which also heated the school room. In Wisconsin, an extensive program known as "the pint jar method" was used in heating foods brought from home. Students were encouraged to bring such items as soups, macaroni, cocoa, etc. in a pint jar. The pint jars were set into a bucket of water on top of the room heater or stove, and by lunch time such foods would be piping hot. Much stress was placed upon the importance of students receiving some hot food at school each day to supplement the cold sandwiches (sometimes frozen solid by the time the student reached school).

County home demonstration agents of the University Extension Service were extremely helpful to rural schools in devising plans for providing some supplementary hot foods and in drawing up lists of suggested "menus" in advance.

Parent-Teacher Associations became increasingly concerned and active in the school lunch movement, and supported activities through donations of funds and equipment. Pots, pans, cooking utensils, portable ovens, and domestic type ranges were often donated by the associations or even by individual families. Such assistance was invaluable in getting the program started in many rural and village schools.

In 1914 the Pinellas County (Florida) health officer, decided to experiment at the school to see what results would come out of a program which would provide each child with a half

pint of milk a day. To get the program started a large white cow was placed on the playground with posters and other material to explain what was being attempted. Amid this setting the children were served their milk. The health officer was so impressed with the results that he suggested they serve a bowl of soup to the children with the milk. A group of mothers and the principal planned and carried out the project serving the children a hot bowl of soup with crackers and one-half pint of milk. The meat and some of the potatoes were donated by the mothers. They also furnished the utensils, and the principal supplied the vegetables grown in the school garden.

Under these varied means of support -by philanthropic organizations, school-oriented associations, school district boards, and individuals-the school lunch program continued to expand, gaining momentum during the decade of the 1920's. It was estimated that by 1981 there were 64,500 cafeterias in operation throughout the country in addition to perhaps 11,500 smaller units serving a single hot dish daily.

The depression years of the 1930's deepened the concern over hunger and malnourishment among school children, and many States and municipalities adopted legislation, some of them including appropriations, to enable schools to serve noonday meal to their children.<sup>24</sup>

## **STATE LEGISLATION AND PROGRAMS**

"By 1937, 15 States had passed laws specifically authorizing local school boards to operate lunchrooms. Although the laws commonly authorized the serving of meals at cost, usually the cost of the food only, four

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<sup>24</sup> Howard L. Briggs, and Constance C. Hart, *From basket Lunches to Cafeterias-A Story of Progress*, Nation's Schools, 8:51-5, 1931.

States made special provisions for needy children. In Indiana (for cities of over 300,000 inhabitants -Indianapolis was the only one), and in Vermont, the boards were authorized to furnish lunch without cost to poor children, and in Missouri (for cities over 500,000 -St. Louis was the only one), and Wisconsin at less than cost prices."<sup>25</sup>

## **EARLY FEDERAL AID**

Although both State and local legislation authorized local school districts to provide meals for children through various means, it soon became evident that local governments and school district boards could not provide the funds necessary to carry the increasing load. Supplementary contributions by charitable organizations and individuals did not suffice. Aid from Federal sources became inevitable.

The earliest Federal aid came from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in 1932 and 1933 when it granted loans to several towns in southwestern Missouri to cover the cost of labor employed in preparing and serving school lunches. Such Federal assistance was expanded to other areas in 1933 and 1934 under the operations of the Civil Works Administration and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, reaching into 39 States and covering the employment of 7,442 women.

## **Commodity Donation Program**

The depression of the 1930's brought on widespread unemployment. Millions of people in the cities lost their jobs and were without means of support for themselves and their families. They were obliged to seek help through public assistance programs.

Much of the production of the farm went begging for a market, surpluses of farm

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<sup>25</sup> The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, USDA, *The School Lunch Program and Agricultural Surplus Disposal*, Miscellaneous Publications No. 467, October 1941.

products continued to mount, prices of farm products declined to a point where farm income provided only a meager subsistence. Millions of school children were unable to pay for their school lunches, and with but limited family resources to provide meals at home, the danger of malnutrition among children became a national concern. Federal assistance became essential, and Congressional action was taken in 1935 to aid both agriculture and the school lunch program.

Public Law 320 passed by the 74th Congress and approved August 24, 1936, made available to the Secretary of Agriculture an amount of money equal to 30 percent of the gross receipts from duties collected under the customs laws during each calendar year. The sums were to be maintained in a separate fund to be used by the Secretary to encourage the domestic consumption of certain agricultural commodities (usually those in surplus supply) by diverting them from the normal channels of trade and commerce. The object of this legislation was to remove price-depressing surplus foods from the market through government purchase and dispose of them through exports and domestic donations to consumers in such a way as not to interfere with normal sales.

Needy families and school lunch programs became constructive outlets for the commodities purchased by the USDA under the terms of such legislation. Many needy school children could not afford to pay for lunches and were sorely in need of supplementary foods from a nutritional standpoint. Thus they would be using foods at school which would not otherwise be purchased in the market place and farmers would be helped by obtaining an outlet for their products at a reasonable price. The purchase and distribution program was assigned in 1935 to the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation which had been established in 1933 as the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation to distribute surplus pork, dairy products, and wheat to the needy. In March 1937, there were 3,839 schools

receiving commodities for lunch programs serving 342,031 children daily. Two years later, the number of schools participating had grown to 14,075 and the number of children had risen to 892,259.

In a still further effort to be of assistance, the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation (and later the Surplus Marketing Administration) employed a special representative in each State in 1939-1940 to work with State and local school authorities, Parent-Teacher Associations, mothers clubs and similar organizations in an effort to expand the school lunch program.

The growth of the program from 1939 to 1942 is evidence of the success of their efforts. During that period the number of schools participating increased by 78,841, and the number of pupils participating increased by 5,272,540. The 1941-42 school year became the peak year in participation and in the use of commodities in school lunch programs before the effects of World War II upon the food supply became evident. During that year, 454 million pounds of food valued at over \$21 million were allotted to schools.

The distribution of commodities was made possible through the teamwork of Federal, State and local governmental units. Vast quantities of foods were distributed to needy families and charitable institutions, in addition to those distributed to schools. It was essential, therefore, to have an effective administrative organization at each level of government as well as physical facilities to care for the warehousing, packaging and distribution of the foods.

At the State level, a director of commodity distribution was responsible for the proper administration of the program, including the ordering of the foods from the Government, arranging for proper warehousing at strategic points throughout the State, setting up and maintaining adequate records to account for the receipt and distribution of all foods shipped into the State, and reporting to the Federal Government from time to time as required.

Generally, foods were received in carload lots and placed in storage at various warehouses. From these points, they were transferred (generally by truck) to county warehouses maintained by the county agencies. From this point they were either distributed by truck to the individual families and schools entitled to receive them, or such recipients called at the county warehouse for their allotments.

Before an agency such as a school board, P.T.A., mothers' club, or other civic or social organization sponsoring a school lunch program could receive surplus commodities, it was required to enter into a written agreement with the state distributing agency providing substantially:

- That the commodities would be used for preparation of school lunches on the school premises.
- That the commodities would not be sold or exchanged.
- That the food purchases would not be discontinued or curtailed because of the receipt of surplus foods.
- That the program would not be operated for profit.
- That the children who could not pay for their meals would not be segregated or discriminated against and would not be identified to their peers.
- That proper warehousing would be provided and proper accounting would be rendered for all foods received.

At first, commodities were allotted to schools based upon the number of undernourished and underprivileged children participating in the program. However, this was soon changed to an allotment based on the total number of children participating in the program.

The maximum quantity of any food that any school could receive was based upon a maximum quantity per child per month established by USDA. This method of allocation persists to this day, with the

exception that for some items the allocation is unlimited if the supply is adequate.

### **W.P.A. Assistance**

Although the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Civil Works Administration and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration provided some financial assistance in payment of labor employed in the school lunch program from 1932 to 1934, it was not until the advent of the Works Progress Administration (later changed to Work Projects Administration) that a very substantial contribution from Federal sources became available in this area of program operations. This agency was created in 1935 to provide work for needy persons on public works projects.

School lunch work was assigned to the Community Service Division of W.P.A. Since there were unemployed, needy women in nearly every city, town, village and rural community of the country, the preparation and serving of school lunches became a very ready area of employment to which such women could be assigned. In addition, they could be employed as bakers, clerks, typists, etc. where the size and nature of the program warranted.

The work was under the direction of a W.P.A. supervisor at the State level. This supervisor, in turn, had a supporting staff of district and local school lunch supervisors who called on the workers in the individual schools to give them needed direction and help. The supervisory staff was generally chosen from people who had special knowledge and abilities in food service. Menus, recipes, and manuals were developed at the State and district supervisory levels which were of inestimable value to the local cooks and helpers in the performance of their duties and did much to improve the quality of the meals served as well as to set standards for equipment, sanitation, and safety in the lunch program. With much of the labor being provided without cost to a school district, lunch prices were held to a minimum, more children participated and the natural outcome

was a very rapid expansion in the program throughout the Nation.

In some areas, projects involving canning foods for the lunch program were undertaken during the summer months when schools were not in session. At times, this involved the preservation of fresh fruits or vegetables received as surplus items, while in some school districts and communities garden projects were set up to provide additional foods for the school lunch program. Some of these foods were canned by personnel employed by the W.P.A.

In March 1941, W.P.A school lunch programs were in operation in all States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, providing help in 23,160 schools serving an average of nearly 2 million lunches daily, and employing 64,298 persons.

#### **N.Y.A. Assistance**

The National Youth Administration was another Federal agency which also provided assistance to the school lunch program. This agency was also founded in 1935, having as its purpose job training for unemployed youth and providing part-time work for needy students. Since they could be employed only under adult supervision, N.Y.A employees did not manage lunch programs but supplied much needed assistance as part-time helpers. They also supplied help in making tables, chairs and other equipment for the lunchrooms. In April, 1941 over 16,000 youths were employed in school lunch projects in 42 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

#### **Effects of World War II**

In February 1942, the school lunch program operating under the assistance from W.P.A and N.Y.A and receiving donated foods reached 92,916 schools serving 6 million children daily.

The effect of World War II upon the nation's economy was making itself evident, however. As defense industries provided work for more and more people, W.P.A payrolls

declined sharply, and the agency's activities came to a close in the early part of 1943.

The huge supply of food required for the support of U.S. Armed Forces and allies soon drained off farm surpluses, except for a few sporadic over-supplies of some items from time to time. Consequently, the kinds and quantities of foods available for distribution to school lunch programs became comparatively negligible, dropping from the high of 454 million pounds in 1942 to 93 million pounds in 1944. Labor supplied by W.P.A had been completely eliminated. The effect upon the school lunch program was dramatically shown.

By April 1944, there were only 34,064 schools serving some 5 million children in the program. But a further decline was not to occur.

#### **Authorization of Federal Funds**

The 78th Congress in July 1943 enacted Public Law 129, amending Section 32 of the Agricultural Act of 1935, authorizing the expenditure of Section 32 funds not in excess of \$60 million for maintaining the school lunch and school milk programs during the fiscal year July 1, 1943, to June 30, 1944.

This assistance was in the form of cash subsidy payments to school lunch sponsors for the purchase of food for the program. No part of the funds could be used for the payment of labor or for the purchase of equipment. Without it the decline in participation previously noted would undoubtedly have been even more drastic. It took time to reach schools with the information, place the procedures into operation, and re-establish programs which had closed down.

The following year there was an improvement in legislation and a further expansion of the program. Under the provisions of Public Law 367, the 78th Congress again set aside \$50 million of Section 32 funds for carrying on the school lunch program in 1944-45, and extended the authority to include child care centers. For the first time, the legislation also provided some

details as to conditions under which Federal assistance could be received:

- Cash payments could not exceed the cost of food purchased for use in the program.
- Accurate records of cost of food had to be maintained.
- Total payments of Federal funds in any State could not exceed the total amount provided for food purchases by the school lunch sponsors, school districts, or other sources within the State, including the value of donated services and supplies.

Again for the 1945-46 school year, the same amount was appropriated as in the previous year, but the legislation included a provision that not more than two percent of the funds allotted to any State could be used for lunch programs in child care centers. Because of a rapid expansion of the program, Congress appropriated an additional \$7.5 million in December 1945, in order to continue the payments to schools until the end of the school year. By April 1946, the program had expanded to include 45,119 schools serving 6.7 million children daily, representing an increase of some 11,000 schools and about 1.5 million children over the 1943-44 school year.

### **NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH ACT APPROVED**

Nevertheless, the program was not expanding as rapidly as desirable. The year-to-year appropriations by the Congress without legislation assuring a continuation of program operations in years ahead, and the past experience of a drastic falling off in Federal support by means of donated foods, made-school boards hesitant to undertake the program.

Equipment installations, especially in the larger schools in cities and rural consolidated districts, were expensive. In the majority of school buildings there was no available room

suitable to the installation of kitchen equipment, separate dining space was not available, and additions to or extensive remodeling of existing buildings would be necessary if the program were to be inaugurated. Without some guarantee as to a future, this was regarded as a high risk investment, and hampered program growth.

The 79th Congress (1946) recognized the need. Legislation was introduced to give the program a permanent status and to authorize the necessary appropriations for it.<sup>26</sup> Following hearings on the proposed legislation, the House Committee on Agriculture Report stated, in part: "The need for a permanent legislative basis for a school lunch program, rather than operating it on a year-to-year basis, or one dependent solely on agricultural surpluses that for a child may be nutritionally unbalanced or nutritionally unattractive, has now become apparent. The expansion of the program has been hampered by lack of basic legislation. If there is an assurance of continuity over a period of years, the encouragement of State contribution and participation in the school lunch program will be of great advantage in expanding the program.

"The national school lunch bill provides basic, comprehensive legislation for aid, in general, to the States in the operation of school lunch programs as permanent and-integral parts of their school systems.... Such aid, heretofore extended by Congress through the Department of Agriculture has, for the past 10 years, proven for exceptional benefit to the children, schools, and agriculture of the country a a whole, but the necessity for now coordinating the work throughout the Nation, and especially to encourage and increase the financial participation and active control by the several States makes it desirable that permanent enabling legislation take the place of the present temporary legislative

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<sup>26</sup> Public Law 396, 79th Congress, June 4, 1946, 60 Stat. 231.

structure.... The educational features of a properly chosen diet served at school should not be under-emphasized. Not only is the child taught what a good diet consists of, but his parents and family likewise are indirectly instructed."<sup>27</sup>

The legislation was identified as the "National School Lunch Act," and Section 2 of the Act defines its purposes: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress, as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other food, by assisting the States, through grants-in-aid and other means, in providing an adequate supply of food and other facilities for the establishment, maintenance, operation and expansion of nonprofit school lunch programs."<sup>28</sup>

The Act spelled out very clearly just how the funds should be apportioned among the States. Exclusive of any amount which might be appropriated from year to year for nonfood assistance (equipment purchases), the Secretary was required to pay out to the States not less than 75 percent of the amount appropriated to be used by the schools for food purchases. The funds allotted to Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands could not exceed 3 percent of the total appropriation for food purchases. The apportionment to States was based on two factors: "The number of school children between the ages of 5 and 17, inclusive, in the State, and the need for assistance in the State as indicated by the relation of the per capita income in the United States to the per capita income of the State." This meant that the States with the lower per capita income would receive a greater proportion of the Federal

funds than States whose per capita income was equal to or greater than the per capita income of the United States.

Section 5 provided that \$10 million of the total appropriation each year should be apportioned among the States to assist school districts in purchasing equipment for the program. These funds were to be apportioned among the States on the same basis as the funds for food purchases.<sup>29</sup>

Section 6 gave the Secretary authority to use up to 8.5 percent of the appropriation for administrative expenses. This section provided also that any funds remaining after the apportionment of funds to the states and territories for food and equipment purchases and for administrative expenses could be used by the Secretary for direct purchases of food to be distributed among the schools participating in the lunch program "in accordance with the needs as determined by the local school authorities."

Section 7 called for a matching of Federal funds paid to the States as follows:

- Fiscal years 1947 to 1950 -\$1.00 for each Federal \$1.00
- Fiscal years 1951 to 1955 -\$1.50 for each Federal \$1.00
- Fiscal year 1956 and thereafter -\$3.00 for each Federal \$1.00

In States where the per capita income was less than the per capita income of the United States, the matching requirement was reduced by the percentage by which the State per capita income was less than that of the United States.

In meeting the matching requirement, the payment for lunches by children, moneys paid

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<sup>27</sup>House Committee on Agriculture Report P.L. 396-79<sup>th</sup> Congress, June 4, 1946. See Chronological Legislative History of Child Nutrition Programs, F&NS, USDA.

<sup>28</sup> P L. 396 -79<sup>th</sup> Congress, June 4, 1946, 60 Stat. 231.

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<sup>29</sup> After the initial appropriation for nonfood assistance for fiscal year 1947, there were no further appropriations for this purpose until 1966-67.

out by school boards, and the reasonable value of foods, equipment, labor and other donations to the program could be regarded as matching funds. However, "the cost or value of land, of the acquisition, construction, or alteration of buildings, of commodities donated by the Secretary, or of Federal contributions" could not be considered as matching funds. States were required to enter into written agreements with the Secretary concerning the receipt and disbursement of Federal funds and foods received in support of the lunch program, and for the supervision of the program in all schools to assure compliance with the provisions of the Act and regulations and directives issued by the Secretary concerning program operations.

Likewise, schools participating in the program were required to execute agreements with the State educational agency. These agreements provided principally that the sponsoring agency for the school would:

1. Serve lunches meeting the minimum nutritional requirements prescribed by the Secretary.
2. Serve meals without cost or at reduced cost to children who were determined by local school authorities to be unable to pay the full cost of the lunch, and not to segregate or discriminate against such children in anyway.
3. Operate the program on a non-profit basis.
4. Utilize as far as practicable the commodities declared by the Secretary to be in abundance and to utilize commodities donated by the Secretary.
5. Maintain proper records of all receipts and expenditures and submit reports to the State agency as required.

In States where the State educational agency could not administer the program in private and parochial schools, a proportionate amount

of the State's share of fund was withheld from the allocation to the State agency for disbursement to the private and parochial schools by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Department also supervised the operation of the programs in these schools and continues to do so where the situation requires.

Section 9 of the Act provided that "Lunches served by schools participating in the school lunch program under this Act shall meet minimum nutritional requirements prescribed by the Secretary on the basis of tested nutritional research." The Secretary prescribed three types of lunches which would be acceptable, designed as Type A, Type B, and Type C. The Type C lunch consisted of 1/2 pint of whole milk served as a beverage. The milk would have to meet the minimum standards of the State and local laws and ordinances concerning butterfat content and sanitation requirements. The minimum nutritional requirements of the Type A and Type B lunches were as follows:

	Type A	Type B
Milk, whole	1/2 pint	2 pint
Protein-rich food consisting of any of the following or a combination thereof:		
Fresh or processed meat, poultry meat, cheese, cooked or canned fish	2 oz.	1 oz.
Dry peas or beans or soy beans, cooked	1/2 cup	1/4 cup
Peanut Butter	4tbsp.	2 tbsp.
Eggs	1	1/2
Raw, cooked, or canned vegetables or fruits, or both	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
Bread, muffins or hot bread made of whole grain cereal or enriched flour	1 portion	1 portion
Butter or fortified margarine	2 tsp	1 tsp.

Type A lunch was designed to meet one-third to one-half of the minimum daily nutritional requirements of a child 10 to 12 years of age. By making some adjustments, this meal pattern could be adapted to meet the nutritional requirements for children of all ages.

The Type B pattern was devised to provide a supplementary lunch in schools where adequate facilities for the preparation of a Type A lunch could not be provided.

Schools were reimbursed for a part of the cost of food purchased and used in the preparation of the noon lunches. This was accomplished through a plan of monthly payment to schools at a certain rate (cents) per meal for the number of meals served which had met the nutritional requirements. The maximum reimbursements allowable, established by the Secretary, were: Type A, 9 cents; Type B, 6 cents; Type C, 2 cents. Reimbursement rates for lunches served without milk were reduced by 2 cents, but this was permitted only if an adequate supply of milk meeting State and local standards as to butterfat and sanitation was not available; otherwise, meals without milk were not reimbursable. Total reimbursement to any school could not exceed the total amount spent for food.

#### **Additional Commodities Authorized**

Further assistance to the program by way of Federal commodity donations was brought about under the provisions of Section 416 of the Agricultural Act of 1949. Authority was granted to the Commodity Credit Corporation to donate commodities acquired by it under its price support activities to various agencies according to certain priorities: "First, to school lunch programs; and to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Federal, State and local public welfare organizations for the assistance of needy Indians and other needy persons; second, to private welfare organizations for the assistance of needy persons within the United States; third, to private welfare organizations for the assistance of needy

persons outside the United States."<sup>30</sup> These donations were in addition to those which might become available through the provisions of Section 32 of the Agricultural Act of 1935.

#### **National School Lunch Act Amended**

The first amendment to the National School Lunch Act occurred in 1952. It changed the formula concerning the apportionment of school lunch funds to Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands both as to food and non-food assistance funds. The same amendment also provided that in the first apportionment of funds following the enactment of the amendment, the amounts received by Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands should "not be less than that amount which will result in an allotment per child of school age in the State . . . having the lowest per capita income among the States participating in such first apportionment."<sup>31</sup>

#### **Special Food Assistance to Needy Schools**

Although the formula for apportionment of school lunch funds among the States and Territories, as stated in the Act, was designed to allocate a greater proportionate share to low income States, the expansion of the program to reach the large proportion of needy children who were entitled to free or reduced-price lunches became a very real burden upon the local districts which were the least able to pay. The situation was further complicated by lack of facilities and space for meal preparation particularly in the smaller schools in rural areas and older schools in large cities.

An experimental program was undertaken whereby special foods would be purchased for distribution to needy schools. The Congress appropriated \$10 million for fiscal year 1962 to be used for direct commodity procurement by the Secretary of Agriculture. Of this amount \$2.5 million was authorized to be used for commodity procurement and distribution

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<sup>30</sup> Public Law 439 -81st Congress, Oct. 31, 1949, 63 Stat. 1058.

<sup>31</sup> Public law 518 July 12, 1952, 66 Stat. 591.

"to provide special assistance to needy schools which because of poor local economic conditions (1) have not been operating a school lunch program or (2) have been serving free or at substantially reduced prices at least 20 percent of the lunches to the children."<sup>32</sup> By the end of the 1961-62 school year the special commodity assistance program was operating in 270 especially needy schools in 22 States, serving lunches to approximately 25,000 children. This form of special assistance was not continued beyond the 1961-62 school year.

## 1962 Amendments

In October of 1962 the Congress enacted some very significant amendments to the National School Lunch Act. Inequities in the apportionment of funds among the States had become evident as the program expanded. For example: State X having the same number of school children and same per capita income as State Y would receive the same amount of funds. But, if State X had a school lunch participation twice as great as State Y, it is obvious that the actual per pupil assistance in State X would be on the average only one-half the assistance which could be granted by State Y.

In correcting this situation, Section 4 of the Act was amended to provide that funds would be apportioned on the basis of (1) the participation rate for the State and (2) the assistance need rate for the State.

The "participation rate" for a State meant the number equal to the number of lunches served in the preceding fiscal year by schools participating in the program under the terms of the Act. The "assistance need rate" was redefined. For any State having an average per capita income equal to or greater than the average annual per capita income for all the

States, the "assistance need rate" would be five. In any State where the average annual per capita income was less than the average for all the States, the "assistance need rate" would be "the product of five and the quotient obtained by dividing the average annual per capita income for such State, except that such product may not exceed nine for any such State."<sup>33</sup> The annual average per capita income was to be determined on the basis of such income for the three most recent years for which the data was available and certified to the Secretary of Agriculture by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Reducing the language in the formula to a "dollar-and-cents" interpretation, it would mean that if adequate funds were appropriated no State would receive an apportionment of funds less than an amount equal to 5 cents per lunch for the number of lunches served in the previous year and that States with a per capita income of less than the national average would receive proportionately more funds, but not more than the equivalent of 9 cents per meal for the number of meals served in the previous year.

Since the new formula for apportionment of funds among the States meant a sharper reduction in allotment in some States, Congress provided for a gradual transition in the application of the new formula over a period of three years. This gave States and local school districts affected an opportunity for making adjustments to compensate for the loss of Federal funds, if that were the case.

**NOTE:** In all subsequent legislation dealing with apportionment of Federal funds for school and non-school child feeding programs, there is a special provision for apportionment of funds to private and parochial schools. The details of the apportionment formula to be applied in each instance are lengthy and will be understood best by referring to the legislation designated in the applicable footnotes.

<sup>32</sup> Public Law 87-112 July 26, 1961, 60 Stat. 230; 75 Stat. 231.

Section 11 of the original School Lunch Act of 1946 (covering miscellaneous provisions and definitions) was re-designated as Section 12. New subsections were added, including the definitions for "participation rate" and "assistance need rate."

In the new Section 11 of the Act, the Congress provided for special assistance in the form of cash reimbursement for meals served free or at substantially reduced prices to needy children. A detailed formula for apportionment of the funds among the States and territories was included.

The selection of the schools for receiving the special reimbursement from Section 11 funds was to be based upon five factors:

1. The economic condition of the area from which the schools draw attendance.
2. The need for free or reduced-price lunches.
3. The percent of free or reduced-price lunches being served in such schools.
4. The price of the lunch in such schools as compared with the average price of lunches served in the State.
5. The need for additional assistance as evidenced by the financial position of the lunch program in such schools.

Despite the enabling legislation to appropriate special funds for providing lunches to needy children, no funds were actually appropriated for such purpose by the Congress until fiscal year 1966.

### **National School Lunch Week Established**

An annual National School Lunch Week was established on October 9, 1962, by a Joint Resolution of Congress. By such resolution "...the President is requested to issue annually a proclamation calling on the people of the

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<sup>33</sup> P.L. 87-823, Oct. 15, 1962, 76 Stat. 944.

United States to observe such week with appropriate ceremonies and activities."<sup>34</sup> The seven day period designated begins on the second Sunday in October each year.

### **Authorization to Buy Dairy Products**

An amendment to the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965 authorized the Secretary of Agriculture "to use funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation to purchase sufficient supplies of dairy products at market prices to meet the requirements of any programs for the schools (other than fluid milk in the case of schools). . . when there are insufficient stocks of dairy products in the hands of Commodity Credit Corporation available for these purposes."<sup>35</sup>

## **CHILD NUTRITION ACT OF 1966**

A new dimension was added to school food services with the enactment of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. In its Declaration of Purpose in Section 2 of the Act, the Congress stated, "In recognition of the demonstrated relationship between food and good nutrition and the capacity of children to develop and learn, based on the years of cumulative successful experience under the National School Lunch Program with its significant contributions in the field of applied nutrition research, it is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress that these efforts shall be extended, expanded, and strengthened under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture as a measure to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children, and to encourage the domestic consumption of agricultural and other foods, by assisting States, through grants-in-aid and other means,

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<sup>34</sup> P.L. 87-780, 87th Congress, Oct. 8, 1962, 76 Stat. 779.

<sup>35</sup> P.L. 89-321, 89th Congress, Nov. 3 1965, 79 Stat. 1212.

to meet more effectively the nutritional needs of our children."<sup>36</sup>

### **Special Milk Program Extended**

Under the provisions of the Act, the Special Milk Program which had been functioning since fiscal 1954 under a separate authorization (Public Law 86-478) was extended to June 30, 1970, and made a part of the Child Nutrition Act. Eligibility for the program included: "(1) nonprofit schools of high school grade and under, and (2) nonprofit nursery schools, child-care centers, settlement houses, summer camps, and similar nonprofit institutions devoted to the care and training of children"<sup>37</sup> -located in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

### **Pilot Breakfast Program**

A pilot breakfast program with specific appropriations was authorized for two years, beginning with fiscal year 1966-67 and ending June 30, 1968.

In selecting schools for participation in the program, State educational agencies were required to give first consideration to "schools drawing attendance from areas in which poor economic conditions exist and to those schools to which a substantial proportion of the children enrolled must travel long distances daily."<sup>38</sup>

In cases of extreme need, the Secretary of Agriculture could approve reimbursement rates equivalent to 80 percent of the operating costs of such a program including costs of obtaining, preparing, and serving food. Schools were required to justify the need for the assistance.

The breakfasts were required to meet the nutritional standards established by the Secretary of Agriculture, on the basis of tested nutritional research. Schools were required to serve the meal free of charge or at reduced

charge to children who were unable to pay the full charge, and, as in the case of the school lunch program, there could be no segregation of, or discrimination against, any child because of inability to pay.

### **Nonfood Assistance Funds**

Section 5 of the Child Nutrition Act provided Federal funding assistance toward equipment. At least one-fourth of the purchase price of any equipment would have to be provided by State or local funds. Schools were required to justify their requests for Federal funds for equipment purchases. Applications for funds had to be accompanied by a detailed description of the equipment to be purchased and how it would enable the schools to extend the lunch and breakfast services to additional children.

### **State Administrative Funds**

Obviously, the special effort to expand the school lunch program to additional schools and children -particularly those in low income areas where the program was not in operation and to inaugurate breakfast programs in the same or similar areas, would require additional staff on the part of State educational agencies. Inestimable time and effort would be required to assist local schools in planning for remodeling of buildings, additions to buildings, planning efficient kitchen equipment and layouts, and determining what additional personnel would be required for breakfast programs and/or expanded noonday lunch services.

In most States, staffing was inadequate even for effective administration of existing programs and additional funds for increasing such staff was generally out of the question. Therefore, Congress made provisions in section 7 of the Act for funds with which to employ additional personnel in States where State funds were inadequate and could not be increased. Again, States were required to provide detailed justification for the funds requested.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> P.L., 89-642, 89th Congress, Oct. 11, 1966, 80 Stat. 885-890.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Centralized School Food Programs Authorized**

With several Federal agencies involved to some degree in feeding school children (such as Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Indian Affairs) the Congress decided that the "conduct and supervision of Federal programs to assist schools in providing food service programs for children" <sup>39</sup> should be assigned to the Department of Agriculture. This could be accomplished, it was felt, by a transfer of school food service funds from other agencies to USDA.

With all school food services under one Federal agency, there could be uniform standards as to nutrition, sanitation, management of funds, supervision, guidance, use of equipment and space, and some guarantee of program continuity. With several agencies having jurisdiction over various kinds of feeding programs in schools, there often developed dual administration within a school, lack of communication, confusion in records of the use of federally-donated foods, etc. Since the Child Nutrition Act provided for participation in all programs by pre-school children as well as those of elementary and secondary grade levels, the consolidation of all programs was a timely step. Section 13 of the Child Nutrition Act provided the authority for placing all school food services under one agency. <sup>40</sup>

## **Miscellaneous Provisions**

Breakfast programs were authorized by the Act to use all commodities donated by the Secretary excepting Section 6 items purchased specifically for school lunch programs.

The benefits of all school feeding programs "conducted and supervised by the Department of Agriculture" were extended to include preschool programs operated as a part of a

school system. The Act prohibited Federal and State laws from decreeing that the value of benefits received by any child under the Child Nutrition Act were to be considered as income for such purposes as taxation, welfare or public assistance programs.

## **1968 Amendments**

In 1968 the National School Lunch Act was again amended by:

1. Adding to Section 9 concerning nutritional requirements the wording "except that such minimum nutritional requirements shall not be construed to prohibit substitution of foods to accommodate the medical or other special dietary needs of individual students." <sup>41</sup>
2. A new section, number 1, was added extending the eligibility for participation in the program to include children in "service institutions," such term meaning "private, nonprofit institutions or public institutions, such as child day-care centers, settlement houses, or recreation centers, which provide day care, or other child care where children are not maintained in residence, for children from areas in which poor economic conditions exist and from areas in which there are high concentrations of working mothers, and includes public and private nonprofit institutions providing day care services for handicapped children."

"Private or nonprofit institutions that develop special summer programs providing food service similar to that available to children under the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs during the school year, including such institutions providing day care services for handicapped children" were also declared eligible. This program became

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<sup>39</sup> P.L. 89-642, 89th Congress, Oct. 11, 1966, 80 Stat. 885-890.

<sup>40</sup> This provision not implemented as of the date of this Publication.

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<sup>41</sup> P.L. 90-302, 90th Congress, May 8, 1968, 82 Stat. 117.

known as the Special Food Service Program for Children.

The funds appropriated under the new Section 13 were to be used by the States in reimbursing the service institutions for meals served, the rate of reimbursement to be established by the Secretary of Agriculture. In cases of extreme need, the Secretary could authorize payment up to 80 percent of the cost of operation of a program, including food and labor. Institutions were required to justify the need for assistance.

A State could use up to 26 percent of the funds received to reimburse service institutions for equipment purchased or rented for the program, but the institution would be required to pay at least 25 percent of the cost or rental of the equipment.

Any funds remaining unobligated at the end of any fiscal year could remain available for disbursement during the first three months of the following fiscal year.

Service institutions were authorized by the amendment to use all commodities donated by the Secretary, excepting those purchased under Section 6 of the National School Lunch Act and therefore to be used only for the school lunch program.

Section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act was amended to extend the breakfast program through fiscal year 1971. At the same time, authority was extended to use State administrative funds for program supervision to include special assistance and service institutions where applicable.

## **PUBLIC CONCERN**

The school lunch program had experienced a continuous expansion from the time it was given permanent status in 1946 until 1968, growing from 4.5 million children participating in 1946-47 to 18.9 million in 1967-68. During the same period, Federal support in cash payments climbed from about \$60 million to over \$160 million (including reimbursement for "milk only" lunches). The

value of donated commodities increased from \$8 million in 1946-47 to nearly \$276 million in 1967-68. In 19467, about 12 percent of all lunches served (including "milk only" lunches) were provided free or at reduced price.

In 1967-68, the national enrollment in public and private schools was approximately 50.7 million, according to a survey of School Food Services in March 1968. About 36.8 million children, or 73 percent, were enrolled in schools participating in the National School Lunch Program with an actual average participation in the program of 18.9 million children, or about 37 percent of the national enrollment. At the time of the 1968 survey, free or reduced-price lunches were still being provided for about 12 percent of the number participating.

Reasons for non-participation in the program were numerous, but in low-income areas and large urban centers low participation was particularly evident. Many of the school buildings in these areas, as well as the small schools in rural areas, were built many years ago when there were no plans for operating a school lunch program, and the buildings did not lend themselves to remodeling for that purpose -neither were local funds available for it. Many of the elementary school buildings in urban centers were built with the idea that the children could and should go home for lunch ("neighborhood schools") and lunchroom facilities were not available. Many of these condition hold true today.

Some school authorities still cling to the idea that a school lunch program must be self-supporting, and others feel that the school has no responsibility in this area. According to a junior high school principal, "We think this is the responsibility of parents and child. We do not check them to see if a student eats. As a whole, we are doing it as a service rather than a need."<sup>42</sup> A principal of a low-income

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<sup>42</sup> Jean Fairfax, Chairman. Committee on School Lunch Participation, *Their Daily Bread*, Atlanta, Ga., McNelley-Rudd Printing Service, Inc., p. 17.

elementary schools says, "I don't believe in free lunches for welfare people . . . It is not a welfare or educational responsibility. It is the parents' responsibility."<sup>43</sup> Another school principal said, "We have a specific allocation of free lunches. There are always more children to feed than the funds allow. We have a policy that no child goes hungry. If they can't get a lunch, then they get milk and crackers."<sup>44</sup>

The net result is that the children in the neediest areas must go without an adequate noonday meal at school, or perhaps an inadequate meal at home, or none at all. Many high school students prefer to bring a bag lunch from home or eat snacks and beverages at a nearby stand or from a vending machine in the school. In some instances the portions served to high school students are not adjusted to meet their needs and they seek other sources of service where their tastes and appetites can be satisfied.

The predominating reason, however, appears to be inadequate funding at Federal, State and local levels with the end result that the children who cannot afford to pay are the losers.

The findings of the Committee on School Lunch Participation published in *Their Daily Bread* in April 1968, gives stark evidence of the general treatment of the free or reduced-price provision of the National School Lunch Act nationally. Contrary to a generally accepted belief that children participating in a school lunch program are provided lunches free or at reduced price, if unable to pay, the committee concluded after extensive national research that: "Of 60 million public elementary and secondary school children, only about million participate in the National School Lunch Program. Two out of three do not participate. Of 60-million school children, fewer than two million, just under 4 percent, are able to get a free or reduced price school

lunch. Whether or not a child is eligible for a free lunch is determined not by any universally accepted formula, but by local decisions about administration and financing which may or may not have anything to do with the need of the individual child. And generally speaking, the greater the need of children from a poor neighborhood, the less the community is able to meet it."<sup>45</sup>

### **National Nutrition Status**

Also in April 1968, the Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States publicly revealed the findings of its nation-wide study, in a paperback book, *Hunger USA*. The Board consisted of selected representation from medicine, law universities, foundations, social action groups, organized labor, and religion. "We have found concrete evidence of chronic hunger and malnutrition in every part of the United States where we have held hearings or conducted field trips, "the Board reported, estimating that at least 10 million persons were suffering from hunger and malnutrition.<sup>46</sup> The Board also alleged that 280 counties in the United States were "hunger counties" and were in need of emergency assistance.<sup>47</sup>

A CBS television documentary portraying case after case of extreme poverty and the need for free or reduced-price lunches by hungry children, particularly from families living on incomes at or below poverty level, was shown to television audiences in May, 1968.

### **Action Demanded**

There had been a growing public clamor for more funds and food for needy families and more free school lunches for needy children for quite some time, and the television documentary plus the publications, *Their Daily Bread* and *Hunger USA*, evoked

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.18

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25

<sup>46</sup> Citizens' Board of Inquiry, *Hunger USA*, Boston Beacon Press 1968, p. 16.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38 and 95-96.

demands for action. Public concern rose to an unprecedented height, and so did the concern and action by Congress and the President. Soon after the report of the Citizens' Board of Inquiry, the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs was created for further intensive study, in addition to the hearings conducted by committees of the House and Senate.

### **Action by the President**

On May 6, 1969, the President sent a message to Congress outlining the problem facing the Nation and making recommendations for action by the Congress and governmental agencies to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and insure a healthful diet for all Americans. The President stated, "So accustomed are most of us to a full and balanced diet that, until recently, we have thought of hunger and malnutrition as problems only in far less fortunate countries.

"But in the past few years we have awakened to the distressing fact that despite our material abundance and agricultural wealth, many Americans suffer from malnutrition. Precise factual descriptions of its extent are not presently available, but there can be no doubt that hunger and malnutrition exist in America, and that some millions may be affected. For them, there must be first sufficient food income. But this alone would only begin to address the problem, for what matters finally is what people buy with the money they have. People must be educated in the choosing of proper foods. All of us, poor and non-poor alike, must be reminded that a proper diet is a basic determinant of good health."

The President went on to state further, "More is at stake here than the health and well-being of 16 million American citizens who will be aided by these programs and the current child food assistance programs. Something very like the honor of American democracy is at issue.... America has come to the aid of one starving people after another. But the moment is at hand to put an end to

hunger in America itself for all time. I ask this of a Congress that has already splendidly demonstrated its own disposition to act. It is a moment to act with vigor; it is a moment to be recalled with pride."

At the President's direction, the Food and Nutrition Service was created as a new agency within the Department of Agriculture exclusively to administer Federal food programs, including the school lunch program, and other agencies involved were directed to coordinate their activities with those of the Department of Agriculture.

On December 2, 1969, the President reasserted the problem as he addressed the opening plenary session of the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health. He said, "Experts can argue -and they do- and you will- about the magnitude of the problem; about how many are hungry, how many malnourished, and how severely they are malnourished. Precise statistical data remain elusive and often contradictory. However, Dr. Arnold Schaefer, the man in charge of the National Nutrition Survey, recently made this cautious but forceful observation: "We have been alerted by recent studies that our population who are malnutrition risks is beyond anticipated findings, and also that in some of our vulnerable population groups - preschool children, the aged, teen-agers, and the poor -malnutrition is indeed a serious medical problem.' We can argue its extent. But hunger exists. We can argue its severity, but malnutrition exists.... In a related matter, we already are greatly expanding our school lunch programs, with the target of reaching every needy school child with a free or reduced-cost lunch by the end of the current fiscal year."

Various panels of the White House Conference recommended expansion of the school lunch program to the extent that every schoolchild shall have the lunch available to him, and that every needy child shall be provided a lunch (and breakfast under certain

circumstances) free or at reduced price when unable to pay the full price.<sup>48</sup>

## **NUTRITION, BEHAVIOR, AND LEARNING**

The school lunch program has continued to grow as an accepted part of the total educational program. Though it was considered by some administrators and teachers as a government program for "getting rid of surplus commodities" a decade or more ago, it has come to be recognized as a valuable tool in the learning process. Teachers, principals and administrators can tell the difference.

"Seventeen out of my 36 children are either not getting any lunch or an adequate one. I see definite personality changes when a child doesn't get lunch."<sup>49</sup>

"Since getting free lunch she has shown a marked improvement in attitude. Last year she was a major discipline problem."<sup>50</sup>

"Children that don't eat are very hard to discipline."<sup>51</sup>

In January 28, 1971, letter from a Green Bay, Wisconsin elementary principal states in part: "I believe this to be one of the finest programs initiated at the school for the following reasons: Attendance has improved by approximately 3/4-day per student. The majority of the children have shown a good increase in weight (some 10-12 pounds). Children are now receiving an on-going education in meal planning and nutrition, as well as invaluable experience in observation. The attitude of parents toward Federal

programs has shown good growth because they are directly involved. This has also created a better home-school relationship."

In a New York City study of 50 malnourished children aged 2 to 9, it was found after improving their nutritional level over a one to three-and-one-half year period, that their IQ's rose by an average of 18 points. No such change occurred in a well-nourished control group.<sup>52</sup>

These are but a few of the typical testimonials stating in simple language the correlation between adequate nutrition and behavior and ability to learn in school.

The day-to-day observation of teachers and administrators of the relationship between inadequate nutrition and behavior and ability to learn is substantiated by scientific studies. Twenty Cape Town, South Africa, children were studied for 11 years, beginning in 1955.- The study was based on the hypothesis "that the ill effects of under-nutrition are determined by (1) Its occurrence during the period of maximum growth and (2) the duration of under-nutrition relative to the total period of growth. . . Evidence is cumulative and impressive that severe under-nutrition during the first 2 years of life, when brain growth is most active, results in a permanent reduction of brain size and restricted intellectual development."<sup>53</sup>

In Chile, 14 infants were treated at a hospital for severe protein malnutrition. These children were discharged from the hospital after a long period of treatment, and thereafter followed up through visits to the outpatient department. They were given a special allotment of milk each month as a special food supplement, as were the other pre-school

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<sup>48</sup> White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health -Final Report, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, pp. 148, 249, 252, 269.

<sup>49</sup> Jean Fairfax, Chairman. Committee on School Lunch Participation, *Their Daily Bread*, Atlanta, Ga., McNelley-Rudd Printing Service, Inc., p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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<sup>52</sup> The School District of Philadelphia, Food for Thought, October 1, 1970.

<sup>53</sup> Undernutrition During Infancy, and Subsequent Brain Growth and Intellectual Development from Malnutrition, Learning and Behavior. Edited by Nevin S. Scrimshaw and John E. Gordon, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, pp. 279-287.

children in the families. At ages 3 to 6 years they were considered adequately nourished and their nutritional condition normal. In IQ tests (Binet) they averaged 62; none was above 76.

The results of the physical and psychological tests led researchers to conclude that brain damage in infancy is permanent at least up to the sixth year of life, despite improving nutritional condition.

In his testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, Dr. Arnold Schaefer, Director of the National Nutrition Survey, stated, "The evidence points toward the fact that malnourished children are more difficult to teach and that they have a lower mental score. The risk of retarded neurological and mental development is such that it cannot be tolerated or ignored." Dr. Schaefer stated further, "When the children were in a boarding school and given the proper food, proper health care and proper education, the high prevalence of some of our biochemical findings disappeared. However, the key problem with preschool children who exhibit growth retardation is that it is doubtful whether they will catch up."<sup>54</sup>

### **Malnutrition a National Problem**

It would be erroneous to conclude that only people who live at or below the poverty level suffer from malnutrition, and hence are susceptible to underdevelopment physically and mentally. According to the food consumption survey conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service in 1965, over one-third of the households with incomes of \$10,000 or more did not have diets that met all recommended levels of all the nutrients to provide a good diet, and nine percent of the families in this income bracket actually had diets rated as "poor." As the family income declined, so did the diet rating. At an income

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<sup>54</sup> Hearings Before the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. U.S. Senate, Monday, April 27, 1970, pp. 784-786.

level of \$3,000 or less, 36 percent of the households had diets rated as poor."<sup>55</sup>

Food likes and dislikes, food fads, ethnic backgrounds, habits, and income all influence the dietary patterns of rich and poor alike. It is therefore evident that to supply merely an abundance of food to combat malnutrition would be only a partial attack upon a complex problem. "It has long been known that if a food supplement is to be successful in nourishing a malnourished population, it must be acceptable to the people for whom it is intended. Changing food fads and habits even in malnourished populations is extremely difficult. Therefore, nutrition education is of the utmost importance to any nutrition program whether in the United States or in other countries."<sup>56</sup>

### **School Lunch Program a Remedy**

The National School Lunch Program offers several approaches to solving the malnourishment problem:

1. The nutritive content of the meal (known as the "Type A") must meet at least a third of the child's nutritional requirements for the day, containing all of the elements essential to a balanced meal.
2. Through Federal, State and local support, the price of the meal is within the ability of most of the children to pay.
3. By Federal regulation, children who are unable to pay the full price of the meal must be provided a lunch free of charge or at a reduced price.
4. The menu pattern is devised to give extensive latitude to the local schools in planning the meals from day to day; yet the pattern will provide the full nutritional

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<sup>55</sup> ARS 62-17. January, 1968, Dietary Levels of Households in the United States, Spring 1966, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, pp. 8 and 9.

<sup>56</sup> Delbert H. Dayton, Early Malnutrition and Human Development, Children, November-December 1969.

requirements when adhered to with a wide variety of foods to choose from.

5. Even though local food habits and patterns are observed in menu planning, the program provides an excellent opportunity for introducing foods which the children are not accustomed to eating at home and which will broaden their range of selection to help insure an adequate and balanced diet.
6. The day-to-day participation in the program develops good food habits which will carry on through adulthood and into the community.
7. Properly coordinated with classroom work, the lunchroom can be a laboratory for actual experience in the principles of nutrition, sanitation, safety, personal hygiene, food service management, courtesies and social graces, budgeting, accounting, food storage and handling, food preservation, delivery systems, and many other subjects of importance to society.

## **TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE**

The Type A meal pattern has been developed over a period of many years testing and is presently recognized as a good, nutritious meal. Nevertheless, it is constantly undergoing further research as to nutritional content and acceptability among elementary and high school students. Cost, availability and other factors which affect participation and expansion are also studied.

### **Engineered Foods**

There has also been close cooperation with the food industry in research into fortifying and enriching food products which might simplify school feeding in schools which lack space and food preparation facilities.

Some such foods are classified as "engineered foods." Since some of these are still in the early stages of development and

others can vary widely in ingredients and nutritive value, the Secretary of Agriculture has issued guidelines to the State educational agencies on the use of engineered foods in the school lunch and breakfast programs. Overall requirements are: "(a) that the food product be on the market or be intended for the commercial market in a form similar to traditional foods; (b) that there be adequate evidence that the new or modified foods contribute to improved nutrition; (c) that the new or modified foods be as acceptable and will cost the same or less than traditional alternatives."<sup>57</sup> Engineered food are defined by the Department of Agriculture as "those foods which are so prepared and processed that they: improve nutrition, reduce cost, offer greater convenience in meal preparation, improve acceptability, and improve stability."

### **Equipment and Service**

Along with the development of engineered foods there has been a constant improvement in food preparation and serving equipment. Preparation of foods in central kitchens for delivery to other schools within a school district has brought about new packaging and food delivery systems to make the job less difficult in schools without kitchens and serving areas. Mobile units which keep hot foods hot or which hold cold foods at the right temperature either in bulk form or in individual containers are readily available on the market. Disposable plates, cups, bowls, and utensils eliminate dish washing problems in schools without equipment and enhance sanitation in school food service.

## **CONGRESSIONAL ACTION**

The 91st Congress took action to accomplish the recommendations of the President, many

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<sup>57</sup> Herbert Rorex, *Implications of the New Regulations on School Food Service as Related to Feeding the Child Now*, Paper presented at 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Industry Seminar, October 20, 1970.

of the recommendations of the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health, and those of witnesses testifying before the Senate Select Committee. New amendments to the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Acts brought about significant changes particularly concerning the requirement for providing free or reduced-price lunches for needy children.

### **Free and Reduced-Price Lunches**

Previous legislation and regulations issued by the Secretary of Agriculture had required school district boards and schools to develop policies and criteria with respect to eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. The 91st Congress amended Section 9 of the National School Lunch Act to establish uniform national guidelines and criteria in the determination of eligibility, and set a maximum charge of 20 cents for lunches served at a reduced price.

The income poverty guidelines prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture as of July 1 each year must be used for the ensuing fiscal year. As of July 1, 1970, the Secretary issued the income poverty guidelines for the 1970-71 school year, stating the family size and applicable income level for 48 States, the District of Columbia, and outlying areas. The income level for Hawaii and Alaska were stated separately. Under the first income poverty guidelines, for example, children from a family of four with a family income of \$3,720 or less annually would be eligible for free or reduced price lunches at participating schools.

### **Public Review**

Because of the substantial changes brought about by the amendments, and with substantial increases in appropriations and funds available, USDA issued proposed new regulations covering the operation of the program. The proposed revisions of the regulations were first published in the Federal Register on July 17, 1970, giving interested

persons 20 days "in which to submit comments, suggestions, or objections regarding the proposed regulations."<sup>58</sup>

This was the first time such procedure had been pursued, giving the State agencies and administrators an opportunity to voice their opinions prior to the issuance of final regulations. Many communications and suggestions were sent in, and a number of changes in the proposed regulations were made. The revised regulations were published in the Federal Register September 4, 1970.

### **Uniform Criteria**

The Secretary imposed upon each State agency special responsibilities for informing schools and service institutions of their obligation to provide free or reduced price lunches and breakfasts to children who are unable to pay the full price. Furthermore, each local school authority (school board in public schools) was required by the regulation to submit to the State agency a policy and criteria which would be followed in determining the eligibility of all children for a free or reduced price lunch. The policy statement had to include, as a minimum:

1. The officials to whom authority would be delegated by the school board to determine such eligibility.
2. Criteria involving income, including welfare payments, family size, and number of children in school, which would be used, respectively, in determining eligibility for free lunches and for reduced price lunches (based upon Income Poverty Guidelines prescribed by the Secretary).
3. Procedure for appealing from the decision of an official together with an assurance that the Board would abide by such procedure.
4. Procedures the board would use in accepting applications for free or reduced

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<sup>58</sup> Reprint from Federal Register of September 4, 1970 (35 F.R 173).

price meals, and alternative methods which it intended to use.

5. Description of the system to be used in collecting payments from children which would fully protect the anonymity of those receiving free or reduced price meals.

The board was required, further, to notify parents of the children in attendance of eligibility standards and policy adopted by the board, and to publicly announce such policy and criteria through the information media. The notice to parents had to be accompanied by a copy of the application form to be used. The final deadline for filing a policy and criteria acceptable to the State agency was set as December 30, 1970.

In addition to the policy and criteria statement, schools were required to give assurance to the State agency that the names of children receiving free or reduced price lunches would not be published, posted or announced in any manner to other children, and that such children would not be required, as a condition of receiving such meals, to use a separate lunchroom, go through a separate serving line, enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance, eat lunch at a different time from paying children, work for their meals, use a different medium of exchange in the lunchroom than paying children, or be offered a different meal than the paying children.

### **Monthly Reports**

Participating schools are required to report each month the average number of children who received free lunches and the number who received reduced price lunches during the preceding month. As of October first of each year and again on the first of March, schools must submit to the State educational agency an estimate of the number of children in school who are eligible for free and reduced price lunches. The State agency, in turn, is required to submit the summary of the school reports to USDA.

### **Section 11 Revised**

Section 11 of the National School Lunch Act concerning special assistance to needy schools and children was again revised by providing for appropriations beginning with the 1970-71 fiscal year in such amounts as might be necessary to furnish free or reduced price lunches to children of low-income families. Furthermore, the use of these funds was no longer limited to food purchases.

### **Planning for Annual Expansion**

Another far-reaching provision of the amendment of 1970 to Section 11 of the National School Lunch Act is the requirement that not later than January 1st of each year each State educational agency must submit to USDA a plan of operation which will describe the manner in which the educational agency proposes to use Federal and State funds to furnish a free or reduced price lunch to every needy child in school.

Until such a plan has been submitted and approved by USDA, a State cannot receive either Federal funds or donated foods for use in programs under the School Lunch or Child Nutrition Acts in the next year.

### **Transfer of Funds Authorized**

USDA may authorize transfer of funds by any State between the various programs under the Acts. Such transfers would be supported by a State plan of operation giving details as to the use of the funds.

### **Appropriations**

A giant step forward to enable local school districts to plan their program operations for the future and to provide for the necessary financing of the program within the time prescribed for school budgeting was accomplished through the amendment of Section 3 of the National School Lunch Act. The amendment provides that "Appropriations to carry out the provisions of this Act and of the Child Nutrition Act for any fiscal year are authorized to be made a year in advance of the beginning of the fiscal year in which the funds will become available for disbursement to the

States. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds appropriated to carry out the provisions of such Acts shall remain available for the purposes of the Act for which appropriated until expended.”<sup>59</sup>

### **Nutrition Education and Research**

In the amendment of Section 6 of the National School Lunch Act the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to use not to exceed one percent of the funds appropriated for the National School Lunch and the Child Nutrition Acts for "training and education for workers, cooperators, and participants in these programs and for necessary surveys and studies of requirements for food service programs in furtherance of the purposes" of the Acts.<sup>60</sup>

### **Special Developmental Projects**

In an amendment of Section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act, State educational agencies may use up to one percent of the funds apportioned to them to carry out special developmental projects, subject to approval by USDA.

### **State Matching Requirement**

By the provisions of an amendment to Section 7 of the National School Lunch Act, beginning with the fiscal year 1970-71, State funds appropriated or utilized specifically for program purposes at the school district level would be required to make up a portion of the matching requirement as follows: For fiscal years ending June 30, 1972 and 1973 -4 percent; fiscal years ending June 30, 1974 and 1975 -6 percent; fiscal years ending June 30, 1976 and 1977 -8 percent; and for each fiscal year after June 30, 1978, at least 10 percent of the matching requirement would come from State funds. Matching of funds received under Section 11 of the Act was not required.

### **National Advisory Council**

Section 14 was added to the National School Lunch Act. It provides for establishing a National Advisory Council on Child Nutrition composed of 13 members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to serve without pay, but to be reimbursed for travel and subsistence. The membership is to be composed of: State school lunch director, school administrator, child welfare worker, person engaged in vocational education, nutrition expert, school food service management expert, State superintendent of schools, or equivalent, school board member classroom teacher, and 4 members of the Department of Agriculture with training, experience and knowledge relating to child food programs.

One of the members is to be designated as chairman of the Council by the Secretary of Agriculture and one was vice chairman. Meetings are to be held upon the call of the chairman, but not less than once a year. Seven members constitute a quorum and the powers of the Council are not to be affected by a vacancy on the Council.

The Council is to carry on a continuing study of school lunch and child nutrition programs and any "related Act under which meals are provided for children, with a view to determining how such programs may be improved."<sup>61</sup> Annual reports and recommendations for administrative and legislative changes are to be submitted by the Council to the President and Congress.

In spite of some criticisms and admitted weaknesses over 25 years of development, the National School Lunch Program has continued to reach out to school children throughout the 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Trust Territories.

In the first year of its legislative life in 1946-47 it assisted in providing food services

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<sup>59</sup> P L, 91-248, 91st Congress, May 14, 1970, 84 Stat. 207.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>61</sup> P L, 91-248, 91st Congress, May 14, 1970, 84 Stat. 207.

in 44,537 schools serving 910.9 million Type A and Type B meals to 6 million children.

In the year of its 25th anniversary some 24.5 million children in over 79,000 schools will receive the nutritional benefits of more than 3 billion meals at school.

The program is constructed upon a system of Federal, State, local, and individual cooperation. It can justly boast of a big percentage of hard-working, devoted public servants at all levels of operation. The extent to which it will accomplish its potential in future years will depend upon the extent to which each individual at all levels of government and society meets his responsibilities under a national dedication to eliminate hunger and malnutrition from America for all time.

## **SCHOOL MILK PROGRAMS**

Fluid whole milk is an important component in an adequate diet, being one of the most important sources of calcium, and contributing substantially to the protein and vitamin A content of a meal. It is an important part of the Type A school lunch. In the 1965 survey on dietary levels of U.S. households, it was found that calcium and iron intakes were substantially below the recommended amounts in one fifth of the households. This was due principally to the low consumption of milk and milk products, vegetables, and fruits.

Federal assistance in providing milk for school children has been in operation since June 4, 1940, when a federally subsidized program was begun in Chicago. It was limited to 15 elementary schools with a total enrollment of 13,256 children. The schools selected were located in low-income areas of the city. The price to the children was 1 cent per one-half pint, and children who could not pay were given milk free, the cost being paid through donations by interested persons.

On October 14, 1940, a similar program was begun in New York. At first only 45 schools were involved, but as time went on additional

schools were approved, and by the end of November, 123 schools were participating. As originally planned, the program was to have concluded at the end of the calendar year. The evident success of the programs in Chicago and New York brought about a continuation of the program in New York and the re-opening of the program in Chicago in January 1941. Schools in other cities became interested, and in April 1941, the program had been extended to Omaha, Nebraska; Ogden, Utah; Birmingham, Alabama; St. Louis, Missouri; and to Boston and the Lowell-Lawrence area, Massachusetts.

Under the plan of operation, dairies submitted bids to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Schools collected 1 cent per half pint from the children and paid it to the dairies. The difference between the 1-cent payment and the cost of the milk to the school was paid to the dairies by USDA, based on monthly invoices certified by the schools. In Chicago, this amounted to 0.893 cent per 1/2 pint; in New York, 1.37 cent; in Omaha, 0.995 cent; and in St. Louis, 0.837 cent.

In all but the Birmingham and Ogden schools, all children in the schools selected for participation were permitted to buy milk at 1 cent per half pint. In Birmingham and Ogden, the needy children in all schools of the city could buy the milk at 1 cent, and the schools were obligated to purchase milk for sale to the other children at prevailing prices, conducting the milk sales in such a way that the needy children receiving the 1-cent milk could not be identified by their peers. In Birmingham, the ticket system was used in much the same way as the system now employed in the school lunch program. Children who could not pay the 1-cent charge were supplied milk free and the cost was met through donations from charitable organizations. In Ogden, the payments by children were made directly to the teacher; no tickets were used.

The program continued to expand nationally through 1942-43, but in July 1943 ceased to operate as a separate program. In that year, Congress provided for cash reimbursement to

schools for the operation of the school lunch program, and the milk program was made a part of the lunch program and was designated as a Type C lunch. In 1946, it was made a part of the National School Lunch Program and again designated as a Type C lunch. The increasing demands upon appropriated funds for payment of reimbursement for Type A lunches gradually reduced reimbursement for the Type C until most schools discontinued it. Funds available were then applied principally to the support of the Type A lunch.

As an incentive for again stimulating the consumption of milk among school children, the 83rd Congress authorized use of Commodity Credit Corporation funds for fiscal years 1954-55 and 1955-56 to reimburse schools of high school grade and under for milk served over and above the amounts they normally used.<sup>62</sup>

Reimbursement was paid at the rate of 4 cents per half pint for all milk served to children in excess of the amount normally used. For schools which had not had a milk service prior to the 194-66 school year, reimbursement was paid at the rate of 8 cents per half pint for all milk served to children. Schools were required to reduce the price of milk to children to the point where there would be no profit accruing. Reimbursement to the school was accomplished by means of a claim for reimbursement submitted at the end of each month. Checks were issued by the State agency from the allotment of Federal funds received.<sup>63</sup> In the following year, the 84th Congress extended the program for two more years, broadened eligibility to include child-care centers, settlement houses, nursery schools, summer camps, "and similar non-

profit institutions as are devoted to the care and training of children."<sup>64</sup>

Regulations by USDA were amended concerning milk eligible for reimbursement and new rates were established. For schools serving a Type A lunch under the National School Lunch Program, a rate of 4 cents per one-half pint was set for all milk consumed by children in excess of the number of half pints served as a part of the Type A lunch (one 1/2 pint per lunch). For schools not participating in the National School Lunch Program, the rate was 3 cents per half pint for all milk served to children.

Prices charged to children could not exceed the cost of the milk to the school, less the reimbursement from Federal funds. If the milk service required an expenditure of funds within a school, the price of milk to children could be increased by the "within-school distribution cost" but not to exceed 1 cent per half pint. In no event could the pricing policy be such as to yield a profit in the operation of the program.

Non-profit institutions which did not provide milk for children as a separately-priced item were required to show an expansion of milk service over the previous year and rates of reimbursement were established accordingly.<sup>65</sup>

With the inauguration of the Child Nutrition Act in 1966, the Special Milk Program was made a part of that Act. Milk consumption in schools has increased nearly ten-fold over the past 23 years. In 1946-47 there were 228 million half pints of milk served as Type C lunches. In 1969-70 there were 2.7 billion half prints served in schools under the Special Milk Program of the Child Nutrition Act.

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<sup>62</sup> P.L. 690, 83rd Congress, August. 28, 1954, 68 Stat. 900.

<sup>63</sup> The Special School Milk Program -A Service Guide to States. AMS, USDA, July 1955.

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<sup>64</sup> P.L. 752, 84th Congress, July 20, 1956, 70 Stat. 596.

<sup>65</sup> The Special Milk Program For Children -A Service Guide to States, AMS, USDA, November 1956.

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