

THE CHILD IS HERE TO STAY

Back in 1935, when the ~~earth was so fruitful~~ and the supply of farm commodities was so abundant in relation to demand, the price dropped as you remember and the whole machinery of government was set in motion to find a way to restore farm purchasing power. The Administration, under legislation supplied by Congress, made a two-fold attack on the problem. The first was to reduce the supply of farm commodities by reducing the acreage devoted to items that were in abundance and paying the farmer for the acreage which he so reduced and devoted to other crops. This was the original Agricultural Adjustment program. It was based on the theory that if the supply of commodities was reduced, the price would go up. The second approach was to increase the use and consumption of such commodities. It was done in several ways. Meat, fruit, cheese and many other items were purchased and handed over for distribution to relief agencies. Money was made available to export wheat to other countries and if the price received did not cover the cost of the wheat, the difference was paid out of the Treasury in the form of a subsidy. Other items like potatoes and sweet potatoes were purchased and diverted to what was called "new uses" for farm products such as the making of starch and alcohol. Later came the so-called Food Stamp Plan whereby a person who was eligible to share in the plan, bought a certain number of orange stamps and then received a quantity of blue stamps to buy certain food items. Finally, there came the School lunch program, under which farm commodities that were in good supply were purchased and delivered to schools for the preparation of lunches for school children.

YEAR BY YEAR PROGRAM

The appropriation of money out of the Federal Treasury for the School Lunch program was a year-to-year operation. That is to say that there was no legal authority to continue the program and it was carried on only because Congress made funds available each year for that purpose. Year by year, the lunch program was expanded until today, it includes more than 43,000 schools in every state in the union and embraces more than 6½ million school children. In the fiscal year 1945, more than 900 million pounds of food was distributed to schools. Three types of school lunches were worked out. The class A lunch was a complete meal at a cost of 9¢. The class B lunch was less complete at a cost of 6¢. The class C lunch was only a bottle of milk at a cost of 2¢. The program has been well developed and has received a large measure of cooperation from state and local school authorities.

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But it began as an emergency program and sooner or later, it became necessary for Congress to determine whether or not, it should be given a permanent status. A Bill to that effect is now pending and there is every reason to believe that it will receive substantial approval in both Houses of Congress. It will provide an annual appropriation out of the U. S. Treasury of \$50,000,000 to be matched by the States. In succeeding years, the States must contribute an increasing amount until the year 1951, when the States will have to put up \$4 for each \$1 appropriated for the purpose of getting rid of surplus products in the hope that the price might be raised. But for several years, there has been no surplus and prices have generally reached the so-called parity level. Thus, a program born out of a price emergency has reached maturity and is about to become permanent. One might therefore add that "The Song Is Ended But The Melody Lingers On." The emergency's child is here to stay.