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# Population Outstripping Food Supply

**T**HE WORLD is producing more food than ever was harvested before, but population is increasing more rapidly than food production.

Grain production, for example, is reported to have doubled between 1950 and 1971, but last year output fell below 1971 on a per capita basis. Hunger, malnutrition and food shortages continue to plague parts of every continent.

Friday, October 16, has been designated as World Food Day to call attention to this problem and look toward the future. It was established by 147 member nations of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and spokesmen say that observances are planned in more than 80 countries.

The need for the world to double total food production in the next 25 years should be obvious to anyone investigating the matter. Predictions say that 80 percent of the world's people then will live in "the developing world," so proposals should be considered carefully.

The United States has been re-

ferred to as "Grocery Store for the World," but questions are arising as to how long we can afford to expose our soil to erosion, consume water for irrigation, pay for costly fertilizers, and battle insects to cater to this trade.

The United States exports more food for money and provides more food aid for needy countries than any other nation.

Almost every country in the world, at one time or another, has received P.L. 480 shipments, although about four-fifths of the total program value is reported to have gone to developing countries. This has averaged about \$1.1 billion worth of food in recent years.

A resolution introduced in Congress a few years ago declared that "Every person in this country and throughout the world has the right to . . . a nutritionally adequate diet." It seemed to imply that producing countries ought to feed the rest of the world whether or not other nations made an honest effort to feed themselves.

In addition to governmental aid, Christian organizations have con-

tributed millions of dollars to help feed the world's hungry.

Food shipped abroad does not always reach those it is intended to help. Dishonest officials may divert supplies for their own profit. More often much food is wasted or spoiled because of lack of storage, transportation and distribution facilities.

Sponsors of the "Hunger and Global Security Act" pending in Congress say it is intended to assure that U.S. aid actually helps those who are hungry. It recognizes that hunger and poverty are major causes of world unrest, and are threats to this nation's security.

Like wage earners who spend their incomes as fast as pay checks can be cashed, the world eats up nearly all it grows each year and obligates future crops with increased population.

This is properly a matter of national and international concern. Still, if the United States is to maintain independence with abundance, we should carefully avoid being drawn into pacts where indigent nations may take unfair advantage of our generosity.