

planning to destroy agriculture in North America and Europe.

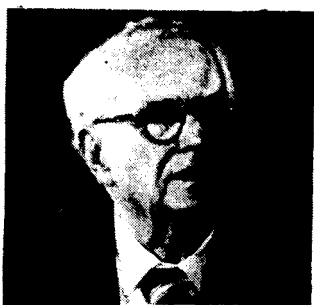
In a recent survey conducted by *Feedlot Management* magazine, a majority of farmers said they opposed U.S. participation in a worldwide food reserve because they feared it would be used to hold down farm prices. However, many farmers oppose the world reserve system simply on the basis of nationalist "we should feed ourselves first" sentiment. Farmers will have to break from this long-standing rural mentality and join with industrial workers in the international fight of the Labor Committees around expanding industrial and agricultural production.

CHICAGO FOOD CONFERENCE MOUNTS ATTACK ON LABOR

Sept. 15 (IPS) — A conference on the food industry held in Chicago Sept. 13 was one among several "mini-summits" called by President Ford allegedly to discuss methods of fighting inflation. While no small farmers were there, the bankers, businessmen, Congressmen, and Administration officials who attended were frank about their true purpose: to launch a crushing attack on unions related to the food industry.

Just to make sure no one missed the point, the Sept. 15 *New York Times* printed an article entitled "Waste in Marketing Lifts Grocery Costs" elaborating on the only concrete "anti-inflationary" proposal to come out of the conference — an increase in labor "productivity." The *Times* enumerates the same "solutions" which Jewel Food Stores and other laid out in Chicago, most of which involve elimination of union work rules and all of which mean loss of jobs.

A few examples: (1) standardization of packaging allowing the automation of warehouse systems; (2) altering Interstate Commerce Commission rules



Labor faker Gorman calls for "public service" slave labor jobs for laid off meatcutters.

preventing truck drivers and railroads from carrying food products on their return-trips; (3) centralized assembly-line cutting and boxing of beef before shipment to retail stores; and (4) electronic check-out stands in stores.

With drastic cuts in U.S. food production scheduled to go into effect, capitalists must implement mass layoffs and rationalization of the food industry. If these cut-backs can take place under the guise of "modernization" and "efficiency," so much the better. At the conference, when a businessman demanded the removal of union work rules, David Conway, the International Bakery and Confectionary Workers Union head, whined: "Only if there are job guarantees."

Labor faker Patrick Gorman, president of the Amalgamated Meatcutters Union, helpfully indicated where his laid-off members will be employed next by calling for "public service" jobs. Gorman's union also was instrumental in supporting the anti-consumer Department of Agriculture revision of beef-grading rules. The new system includes inferior, leaner cuts of meat in the "Prime" and "Choice" categories, encouraging the further reduction of livestock grain-feeding. The grain "saved," according to the *New York Times*, then can be diverted to a [Rockefeller-controlled] World Food Reserve. Grain-fed beef will shortly become a rare luxury: the latest USDA statistics show the number of cattle and calves placed on feed Sept. 1 was down 25 per cent from last year, a downward trend of several months.

"Equal" Sacrifice

Secretary of Agriculture Butz was brazen in his attack on working class diet: "We've got seven million more cows and calves on the farms and ranches right now than a year ago. They'll be coming to market though they won't be fattened to the weights you're used to. It's just another way that everybody, including the farmers, is going to have to tighten his belt in the coming months." Gorman was quick to agree, going so far as to endorse "complete and drastic" wage-price controls, "if they apply to every segment of the population, so that the rich would sacrifice just like the working people and the poor."

Few workers are likely to swallow the lie mouthed by the *Times* (and by implication by Gorman) that workers' wages cause inflation. Last fall, the U.S. Labor Party conducted a study of food prices which determined that at least 59 cents of every consumer's dollar spent on beef can be written off as pure profit and capitalist waste: 37 cents goes to commodity markets speculators; 9.5 cents goes to large capitalist farmers, big ranchers, and feed lot operators; 7.5 cents goes directly to the banks (for example, interest on farm debt); 2.7 cents goes to processor and supermarkets profits; and 2.3 cents goes to landlords.