HERBERT HOOVER'S USE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES FOOD ADMINISTRATION 1917-1919

BY

LEONARD P. DILEANIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

(Journalism)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

1969

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Few persons, in my opinion, can undertake the task of writing a thesis without the help and foresight of those more qualified in research than themselves. In my case, I am deeply indebted to Professor Scott M. Cutlip, my teacher and adviser, who first acquainted me with the vital importance of public relations in our society and pointed out this particular area of interest. His guidance and constructive criticism over the many months have provided me with the necessary direction and inspiration to see the task through to the end. For this, I am truly grateful.

A number of people have helped in a great many ways. To Professor Harold L. Nelson, I add my humble thanks for teaching me some of the methods and techniques of historical research in mass communications. My other professors and fellow students have contributed more than they will ever know.

While much of my research was conducted at the University of Wisconsin, my several visits to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa, were particularly worthwhile and productive. Mr. Dwight M. Miller, Chief Archivist, and his expert staff of librarians were most helpful in my research. I sincerely appreciate

their competent assistance.

My wife, Betty, to whom I dedicate this thesis, typed the many drafts and performed innumerable other chores. It could not have been completed in the time available without her untiring efforts and constant encouragement.

My three daughters, Margaret Ann, Jill, and Tracie, are thanked for their understanding and devotion during my several trips away from home and the many long hours spent on this study. The cooperation of the whole family merits my highest praise, which can never be fully expressed.

Never before in twenty-six years of military service have I been confronted with an experience any more challenging or rewarding. For this opportunity, I am especially grateful to the United States Army.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The story of Herbert Hoover's rapid rise to fame is interesting as well as inspiring. In August, 1914, he was an eminent engineer, known favorably and widely in his own profession; beyond that, he was virtually unknown. Thirty months later he was a household word, his name the root for that new slang verb, "to hooverize." Other individuals in our history have risen more suddenly; but always before, some dramatic act or crisis exploded them into national prominence--such as Dewey's naval victory in Manila harbor, Bryan's cross-of-gold speech, or Lindbergh's trans-atlantic flight. However, Hoover was one of the few to rise so fast and far on the drab wings of modest merit.[1]

Many historians have written about Hoover's life, his accomplishments, and his weaknesses. Several have inferred that the communications media made an important contribution toward Hoover's rise to fame and his ultimate election to the White House. One author wrote, "Publicity had made him a superman in the eyes of the public; organization had won the support of the delegates."[2] But all too few have emphasized the methods and appeals that Hoover used and his relations in dealing with the American

people to win public acceptance and support for his programs.

Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr., in his book, Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion, states, "It is . . . doubtless true that throughout his public career, Hoover, as a highly intelligent man and skillful executive, had an intellectual appreciation of the usefulness and potency of public relations." Cornwell further explains that Hoover, before his nomination, had one of the most sustained and spectacular publicity build-ups in the history of the presidency.[3] The assertion that Hoover understood and used public relations practices during his earlier career prior to his election is supported only by oft-repeated broad generalizations.

Preliminary study of Hoover's career in government service prior to his successful nomination to the presidency led me to this general question for further research: What part, if any, did public relations play in Hoover's attainment of prominence and success while serving as United States Food Administrator? Although the newspaper was the primary mass communications medium during World War I, other publicity media and methods existed at the time and had to be considered. Other associated areas of interest involved whether or not Hoover had a public relations staff within his organization and, if so, what specific techniques and practices were used by them to help

Hoover win public support? It was hoped that such determination would provide some insight into Hoover's policies toward the mass media and the importance he attached to public relations. It was also anticipated that an understanding of the difficulties experienced with the various publics might provide additional information on the history and social utility of the practice of public relations during the second decade of this century, and a brief review of the results achieved.

It is my hope to turn a few beams of light into this twilight zone, and to furnish a more comprehensive and illuminating picture of Herbert Hoover and his use of public relations during the period of World War I.

A Synopsis

Hoover's interest in people and the problems of the twentieth century were instrumental in causing him to leave his chosen profession as an engineer for one in public service. Born in a small town in Iowa and left an orphan at an early age, Hoover rose to become the first President of the United States to be born west of the Mississippi. He continued his interest in national affairs until his death in 1964.

All during World War I, Hoover believed that the American people were intensely patriotic. They needed only to be told with conviction what they might do to help the war, and they would do it.[4]

Hoover later recalled that shortly after the United States entered the war, he had a conversation with a prominent German official who had spent some time in the United States and had a much deeper appreciation of what America's entry into the war would mean than did most Germans. His final remark to Hoover after a long discussion was:

> I do not fear the American soldiers, because they cannot arrive in time; what I fear is the intelligence and devotion of 100,000,000 of original minds and people trained to a faith in individual initiative. The day that these people, now so materialistic in outward appearance, are stirred spiritually, that day is the day of Germany's doom.[5]

From the beginning of World War I in August, 1914, until the close of the Russian Relief work in 1924, Hoover created and directed organizations which were responsible for obtaining and delivering vast quantities of foodstuffs to the peoples of various European countries. The importance and magnitude of this work and the results accomplished can hardly be overestimated.

During the period of the Food Administration alone, more than fourteen million American women signed a pledge to cooperate fully with the United States Food Administrator in his plans to conserve food for overseas shipments, and every producer, manufacturer, and distributor of food products, every hotel, restaurant, and home, large or small, was affected in some way by the food conservation campaign.

Well over a half million American men and women were enrolled and gave their entire time, largely without pay, for periods extending from a few months to several years in service with the Food Administration. This effort resulted in furnishing to Europe food and related supplies to the value of more than $5,234,000,000.[6] This tremendous undertaking could not have taken place without the effective use of public relations.

Later, following the Allied victory in Europe, historians note that Hoover was receptive toward a presidential nomination in 1920. When he did not get one, he developed into a realistic politician. He had money to spend and he spent it. A powerful and effective publicity machine advertised him to the people as a great humanitarian with a thorough knowledge of the economic facts and principles used in government.

When President Harding subsequently appointed him as Secretary of Commerce, Hoover enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most capable men in the administration. He reorganized his department and greatly expanded its activities. He stimulated the Bureau of Standards into activity that resulted in the standardization of various products--among them, paving bricks, beds, lumber, hotel chinaware, and steel bars. Such standardization eliminated waste in production and promoted efficiency and economy in the various trades. The solutions he offered to control

the flood waters of the Mississippi River placed him before the public once more as a great humanitarian, a role already associated with his name.

It was during this period that a group of newspaper correspondents fell into the practice of gathering in his office several afternoons a week. Here Hoover would talk to them freely, not only about the affairs of his department, but also about the affairs of other departments and of the presidency. He did not hesitate to criticize his colleagues. Many of the newspapermen came to believe that he knew more about governmental matters and world affairs than any other man in the administration. To Americans in general, he became an able businessman in government who was above the petty ways of partisan politics.[7]

The press intelligence system that Hoover earlier developed during World War I, which won for him the title of "God's gift to the correspondents,"[8] is an important part of the public relations story which will be related in subsequent chapters.

The Public Arena

The turn of the twentieth century brought with it an increased recognition of the importance of public opinion. Walter Lippmann and other authors wrote about its powerful influences. Lippmann said that "the pictures inside the heads of human beings, the pictures of

themselves, of others, of their needs, purposes, and relationship, are their public opinion." He further stressed that public opinions must be organized for the press if they are to be sound.[9]

The part that public relations played in this process in helping Hoover to mold a favorable public opinion for his food conservation program is of importance in this essay. Although the term "public relations" did exist at the time of the Food Administration, it was not as well known as other terms generally associated with its function.

Hoover used the terms "publicity director" and "education officer" interchangeably. Professor James L. McCamy, in discussing government publicity as practiced in 1914, stated, ". . . publicity practices are part of the larger category of 'public relations.' Federal agencies touch citizens in varied ways, and every meeting between 'the government' and the citizen is an episode in the complex flow of public relations."[10]

This point is mentioned mainly for clarification. The fact that "public relations" as a term was not widely used during the period being investigated does not detract from the function itself, since the evidence herein reinforces the supposition that the appeals made by Hoover were accepted by the majority of the American people and were successful to that degree. The recognition of these

various courses of action, their social utility, and the ways and means they were used to gain public support are the primary factors to be considered. It is within this historical frame of reference that I have related and evaluated the evidence uncovered to the overall problem under study.

In retrospect, the definition aspired to in this thesis is one of several expressed by Cutlip and Center--that "public relations is the planned effort to influence opinion through acceptable performance and two-way communication."[11]

Hoover undoubtedly realized that he was not alone in the public relations arena. The conservation of food was but one of several important patriotic campaigns then going on to enlist public support.

World War I gave the contemporary practice of public relations its first great offensive impetus. George Creel and his effective Committee on Public Information (CPI) demonstrated, as never before, the power of mass publicity and the techniques of mobilizing opinion. Creel emphasized the positive approach. The Liberty Loan drives, although based primarily on advertising techniques, taught businessmen and other executives how public relations practices could be used effectively.[12]

The American Red Cross was also competing for public recognition. Here was an organization that had been

in business for quite some time. Their method of operation in preparing for a campaign before solicitation actually started was well prepared and organized.

The temperance movement was another campaign which gained momentum immediately prior to and during America's entry into the war. Strong lobby forces promoted legislation to prohibit the use of grain and cereals in the distillation of alcoholic beverages. On December 8, 1917, President Wilson issued a proclamation limiting the consumption of foodstuffs by brewers to seventy per cent of their 1917 consumption, and the alcoholic content in beer was reduced to two and three-fourths per cent.[13] Not satisfied with these gains, the prohibition forces continued their pressure on legislators to completely dry up the country. Hoover had much to say about the effects of prohibition when these forces attempted to integrate temperance measures into the food saving program.

With all these and other campaigns going on simultaneously, the education of 100,000,000 people in new eating habits was made even more difficult. With the shortage of food abroad, the partial failure of transportation, the shortage of labor, and the resulting world conditions, Hoover's appeal to the American people was aimed at conservation and protection of the food supply then in existence or soon to be harvested, so that it would supply the population of this country as well as our

European Allies.

Hoover believed that this could be done if Americans saved and did not waste. "It will require our careful thought three times a day," he said. "Not only must we eat carefully the products of the day, but we must store carefully the vegetables and fruits that are now so abundant."[14]

To implement this task, one of the most important public relations campaigns sponsored by the newly-organized Food Administration involved the summons to the women of America to save food. The manner in which the press and cooperating organizations assisted Hoover in enlisting more than fourteen million homes in the United States as members of the Food Administration is a story which merits telling.

Sources and Organization of Thesis

None of the biographies written about Herbert Hoover deal specifically with his use of public relations. Neither do they provide conclusive evidence to either support or refute the several propositions enumerated earlier. Hoover's Memoirs makes little mention of public relations. William C. Mullendore's History of the United States Food Administration pays little attention to the role of the mass media and does not cover public relations as such. The primary source materials used in my research consisted of Hoover's personal papers and other official correspondence at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library

in West Branch, Iowa, which were made available to me. These papers contain a wealth of public information on the Food Administration and consist mainly of materials directed to the American public and consumers. In addition to 1,400 press releases, this collection includes a wide variety of booklets and printed bulletins, posters, wartime recipes and household-aid bulletins, information for speakers, food exhibits and displays, and other evidence of public relations activities which enlisted national cooperation with the wartime food program.

In addition to the original source documents, many books and other publications, either written by Hoover or about him, are immediately available for reference. A complete list of primary and secondary sources used in the preparation of this thesis is outlined in the bibliography. Other pertinent references were consulted in the Wisconsin State Historical Society Library and the Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin.

Although my primary focus was aimed at the period of the Food Administration, I soon found, after immersing myself in the material, that Hoover's appreciation of public relations had its real beginning while he headed the Commission for the Relief in Belgium (C.R.B.). It was also in England that he first met Ben S. Allen, who headed the publicity staff of the C.R.B. during this first food-supplying effort. For this reason, I decided to begin with

a brief flashback of certain highlights of the C.R.B., with emphasis on Hoover's attitude toward publicity and public opinion , and the close working relationship which began between Hoover and his "outside man," Ben Allen. This relationship was to continue from 1917-1919, when Hoover asked Allen to direct the Education Division of the Food Administration in Washington, D. C.

The succeeding chapters have been arranged to present those matters of primary interest in public relations. These events were either generated by Hoover, or resulted from external influences which reflected both on his reputation and ability while he occupied a position of prominence in the public arena. I have attempted to record these matters in chronological order for obvious reasons.

Finally, every effort has been made to keep to a minimum the extraneous social, economic, and political implications which existed at the time. However, it should be recognized that public relations does not operate in a vacuum; neither can it be divorced from the many issues that occupy a central position in the market place of free ideas.

FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1]Will Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography (New York, 1928), 201.

[2]Charles W. Smith, Public Opinion In a Democracy (New York, 1929), 148.

[3]Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr., Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion (Bloomington, Indiana, 1965), 100-01.

[4]Will Irwin, "Hoover As an Executive," Saturday Evening Post, March 27, 1920, p. 76.

[5]New York Times, July 29, 1917, p. 2.

[6]Frank M. Surface and Raymond L. Bland, American Food In the World War and Reconstruction Period (Stanford, 1921), vii-ix.

[7]Smith, Public Opinion, 146-48.

[8]Delbert Clark, Washington Dateline (New York, 1941), 66.

[9]Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York, 1922), 18-19.

[10]James L. McCamy, Government Publicity (Chicago, 1939), 1.

[11]Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964), 12.

[12]Ibid., 44.

[13]William C. Mullendore, History of the United States Food Administration, 1917-1919 (Stanford, 1941), 109.

[14]Hoover Papers, U. S. Food Administration Files, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, Box 1-C/154. Hereafter cited as Hoover Papers.

CHAPTER I

PERIOD 1914-1917

The Opening Sounds of War

> We have stated our case bluntly and frankly. Our only court of appeal is public opinion.
>
> Herbert Hoover[1]

Hoover had gone to Europe early in 1914 to obtain from various governments their official participation in the Panama Pacific Exposition, then building in San Francisco, and was in London when the war broke. Thousands of American tourists and businessmen in Europe started for home immediately on the outbreak of the war. But the going was not easy, and grew increasingly difficult as the war-ravaged European national frontiers closed more and more tightly.

One of the difficulties they encountered was the quickly adopted European moratorium on letters of credit, drafts, and checks. The only money readily usable was cash, and few travelers carried their funds in cash. London was full of stranded Americans, solvent at home, but effectively broke in the English capital. Others were destitute from loss of employment. They all needed somebody to provide them with hotel rooms and meals, railway and steamer tickets, and pocket money.

They needed a new kind of tourist agency, which would not only arrange for their subsistence and traveling needs, but would provide the cash to pay for them either on the basis of personal checks of unknown Americans drawn on unknown American banks, or of charity.[2]

Hoover did not know it at the time, but he was about to begin his first major experience in public relations. When the American newspapers were full of the adventures of American tourist refugees, a paragraph appeared saying that "one H. C. Hoover, a mining man in London, was advancing gold to stranded Americans." The public heard a little more about him when Dr. Walter Hines Page, the U. S. Ambassador, requested that Hoover take charge of getting 100,000 stranded American tourists out of Europe. In three days Hoover had an organization running. In a month it ran so smoothly that Hoover was able to return to his own pressing matters. But not for long; fate gave him only two weeks to round up his own affairs.[3]

Birth of a Commission

When the invading German Army closed the Belgian borders in August, 1914, and the Allied fleets began their long blockade of Germany and of German-controlled Belgium, it became immediately obvious that the Belgians would soon face starvation.

The Belgians took what action was possible to them

under German control to conserve and to equitably distribute the food on hand. A volunteer unofficial national committee, composed of prominent citizens and three American businessmen resident in Brussels, obtained permission from the German authorities to send a few representatives to London to try to arrange for purchases and importation of food from England.

The first representative, Millard Shaler, an American engineer, found himself facing innumerable obstacles. He finally asked Hoover for help, and Hoover brought him to Ambassador Page for advice on how to secure permission to move the small food purchases he had made through the blockade and through the German lines.

Before arrangements could be completed, other deputations of frantic Belgians reached London. The Ambassador not only realized the seriousness of the situation, but recognized also that if anything more than first aid was to be effected, there would have to be a concentration of effort by an unofficial organization of a neutral government with a vigorous and resourceful head.[4]

Hoover's name was recommended to Ambassador Page by Emil Francqui, head of the Belgian group, as the man who could do the job. According to his own subsequent account, the Ambassador answered, "He is the man I have in mind; the only American who knows Europe intimately enough and has ability enough."[5]

Had Hoover elected to pursue his regular vocation during the war his material reward would have staggered the imagination. With his associates he controlled some of the richest deposits of base metals ever discovered, and some of these mines were already producing heavily. Hoover also knew the possibilities, since early in the struggle he predicted that the war would last for several years and strain the resources of the world. Apparently he made his decision early, for scarcely had the Commission for Relief in Belgium been formed when his mining offices were closed never to be reopened. There is no evidence that he ever boasted of the sacrifice or regretted it. Indeed, the only mention Hoover ever made of any personal reaction to the vast relief projects which he directed was the statement that when his career was reviewed, he would be content with the record that he was connected with a relief project which reduced infant mortality in Belgium.[6]

The organization which Hoover was to head, the immensity of whose labors nobody dreamed of in its days of beginning, was to become famous as the Commission for the Relief in Belgium (C.R.B.). Through the aid of the American press representatives in London, the new American organization was to be made widely known to the American public,[7] as well as the work of Ben S. Allen, which I will detail shortly.

Hoover's Helpers

It is a commonplace to tell how well the C.R.B. did its work, the immense sum of more than $250,000,000 which it handled for Belgium; its employment of tugs and railroad cars; its vast system of warehouses, mills, factories, and bakeries; its monthly distribution of 220,000,000 pounds of bread, 20,000,000 pounds of bacon and lard, 5,000,000 tins of condensed milk; beans, corn, coffee, sugar, and thousands of tons of other commodities; its thousands of devoted volunteer workers in practically every part of the world; its 8,000 committees in Belgium and out; and the relatively small sum of $10,000,000 which America contributed to the work--these things are oft-told, but they are miracles.[8]

Hugh Gibson, a foreign service diplomat in the State Department, outlined Hoover's philosophy on publicity as follows:

> In his struggle for efficiency, one of Hoover's cardinal principles is to focus publicity and credit upon the organization that is doing the work, and not upon the individual men composing it. All the publicity work of the C.R.B. was by his direction concentrated on securing popular approval and support for the commission itself; and Hoover's name was studiously kept out of the papers. His work has become known, but it is because of its outstanding importance and against his own efforts. He is modest to an extent that is sometimes painful to people who deal with him, and never suffers such acute misery as when being extolled publicly for what he has done.[9]

Two of the members of Hoover's staff largely responsible for keeping the American public informed of the work of the C.R.B. were Will Irwin and Ben S. Allen. Both were graduates of Stanford University, journalists, and personal friends of Hoover. Will Irwin's friendship went back to when he and Hoover were classmates together at Stanford. He said of Hoover: "While he walked among us, he was a kind of legend too, a superb, able personage. Standing, rather than popularity, seemed a better word to express his influence on his fellow students."[10]

The Outside Man

Ben Allen was a foreign correspondent for the Associated Press in London when he first met Hoover in 1912. Robert M. Collins, then Chief of the A.P. Bureau in London, asked Allen if he had letters of introduction to Hoover. Allen explained that he had but had not presented them because there was no mutual obligation involved, and furthermore, he understood that others having no claim other than having gone to the same college had rather abused Hoover's hospitality.

This reply was not convincing to Collins. He explained that Hoover knew that the latest addition to the A.P. staff had letters to him and Collins wanted them presented.

Allen went to No. 1 London Wall Building and presented his letters. There he met a man who stood at the

top of his profession. With thousands of miners working under his direction, Hoover met problems every day equipping him for the great public service he was to render within a few years.

Allen told his wife, "He is not the sort of chap you would expect to indulge in small talk, and we had no business beyond the exchange of greetings." But these greetings were cordial, and the reporter came away feeling that he had met an American he wanted to know better.

The opportunity soon came for within a few days, the Hoovers invited Allen and his wife, Victoria, to have Sunday supper with the family at Red House on Horton Street.

Hoover and Allen had much in common. Both had very definite ideas to express regarding California in general and Stanford in particular, interlarded with the interchange of information about mutual friends in worlds of mining and journalism.

Of this first meeting, Mrs. Allen wrote, "Two men grew to know each other that night, and I believe fate sat at that table. One grew to be one of the greatest characters in history; the other grew to know him and to interpret him better than anyone else who ever undertook that difficult task."

Allen himself said, "A big man, big enough to be President."

Many times since, Mrs. Allen heard her husband exclaim, "Oh, how I wish the Chief /Hoover/ would endure the limelight with more grace, but how I do admire him for disliking it."[11]

Allen felt that there were three types of response to the spotlight of publicity: "The man who frankly dislikes it, and who is to be respected for his dislike; he who loves it, but denies it and who is despised by the manipulators of it; and those who delight in its effulgence."

To Ben Allen there could be no higher title in journalism than that of reporter. He and his colleagues revolted at the English term "press man," commonly used to designate a reporter, and there seemed to be no generic term comparable to our "newspaperman."

Never once from that night of the supper party at Red House did Ben Allen waver in his profound belief in the greatness of the man whose cause he espoused with the fervor of a crusade, and whom he publicized with every art at his command.[12]

In March, 1914, while Mrs. Hoover was in America, Hoover asked Allen to stay with him in Red House. Hoover informed Allen that, vast as his mining ventures were, he had made his plans to return to California to devote his

talents to Stanford University and his home state.[13] Little did they know of the events which were to transpire in a period less than a month, the start of World War I, and the beginning of their long working relationship together.

Public Opinion and Publicity

The appeals made by Hoover for the public support of his policies, so familiar during his direction of the Food Administration, the Department of Commerce, and as candidate for the presidency, far antedated these activities. In a letter to Allen in January, 1914, Hoover told of having released the story of the refusal of England and Germany to participate officially in the Panama Pacific Exposition in order, as he explained, "that the pressure of public opinion might be brought to bear against them, and in the event of that not proving successful, it would at least give greater public support to the Exposition." Hoover believed that the publicity he received out of this affair had put the Exposition on its feet so far as American sentiment was concerned, and said, "If I have to be offered up as a sacrifice on this altar I can stand it."[14]

Hoover had a profound appreciation for the force of public opinion, and he regarded such support as essential to the very existence of the great relief work he directed.

In this policy, he had the unwavering support of Allen, the outside man. Because of his enthusiasm over the first appeal issued on behalf of the newly organized C.R.B., Allen talked constantly about it, so that the document itself and the incidents surrounding its publication remained a vivid memory for some time, particularly, since one of these incidents involved the only time in which Allen deliberately disobeyed an order from his Chief. Like many Hoover documents, this appeal underwent careful preparation and many revisions. The original, in the A.P. office in London, had some of the final corrections in the handwriting of the Chief. Finally completed to his satisfaction, Hoover turned it over to Allen with explicit instructions that it must be sent as coming from the C.R.B. and not as a statement from him as Chairman. "We are only a group of glorified office boys," he said, "trying to get away with a tremendous job, and no individual has any right to get any glory out of it in the way of publicity. Besides, we want the commission to become known as a responsible institution, for we may all be hung up on the barbed wire before this work is well under way."[15]

The newspaperman argued against this instruction on the theory that the American people tend to personalize an institution; and further, that from a news standpoint, it added to the responsibility of the appeal to have an individual rather than an organization back of it--but to

no purpose. Allen left for the A.P. office with the statement in his possession, completely opposed to this final decision. The appeal bristled with the personality of Hoover. Certainly it was as entirely his production as the C.R.B. was his organization, in spirit and in form. But one did not disobey the Chief lightly, and Allen went with lagging steps to give him time to justify his conscience with the arguments which seemed to be all on his side. The clincher came, as he later related, with the thought that to obey the instructions he had received would compel him to do something in violation of his instinct as a newspaperman. After all, this was a news story and should be so handled. Arriving at 24 Old Jewry, the C.R.B. fell beneath the sweep of the blue pencil and the name of Hoover took its place.

Hoover expressed his disapproval promptly and vigorously, but so convinced was the reporter of the righteousness of his stand that he had no apologies to make. Thus, the name of Hoover, heading a dramatic appeal for the salvation of ten million people from starvation, came first to the notice of millions of his own countrymen and other millions in the warring and neutral worlds.

Hardly had the appeal for support of the Belgian relief work been circulated when requests for Hoover's picture began to arrive. As the publicity director for the commission, Allen sought to fill these requests by

appealing first of all to Mrs. Hoover. Only one recent photograph of her husband existed at the time and she refused it on the ground that it was a family portrait and should not be published.

Allen then appealed to the Chief, who flatly refused to have his photograph taken because he could not understand why anyone should be interested in seeing his picture. Finally, the argument became rather warm, with the reporter maintaining that it was the business of the American people to see the Hoover picture if they so desired; consequently, his personal desires were entitled to no consideration. At this point the interview terminated abruptly in a drawn battle, but within the next few days, Hoover visited a photographer.

However, as long as he was responsible for publicity concerning Hoover, Allen was never permitted to circulate the Chief's picture without a direct request having been made for it. He may have envied the easy lives of other publicity men whose employers seemed to have an irresistible attraction for the camera, but Allen's admiration and respect held steadfast for the man who always regarded such presentation to the public as an ordeal. But he never swayed in his conviction of the importance of public opinion.[16]

Actually, had it not been for public opinion, the C.R.B. might never have come about. Military leaders in

England believed that the German Government should shoulder the responsibility of feeding occupied Belgium. Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, completely agreed with the military. Toward the latter part of January, 1915, Belgian needs were greatest and hopes were lowest. The British Government had set its face against further aid.

The day before a cabinet meeting, at which time it appeared that the military opposition to Belgian aid would be formally accepted as a governmental policy, Hoover called on Lloyd George. This report of the conversation was in private circulation at the time:

> "Some Frenchmen are starving now," said Hoover. "If you cut us off from aiding Belgium, many Belgians will starve."
>
> "This is monstrous cruelty," said Lloyd George. "Neutral public opinion will compel the Germans to do their duty and feed these starving men and women. We shall make known to the world --"
>
> "What will you make known?" asked Hoover. "The Germans say they have not the food. They will say at once if you will take off the blockade they will feed the Belgians. You say you must maintain the blockade on Germany. All we say is that between your contentions the world will not stand for starving ten million people. We offer another way out. They will make known to the world that you can feed the Belgians--you and France--if you will. And so will I. If you refuse aid to these people, I will not hold my tongue. I will inform the neutral nations myself."
>
> The next day the little Welshman slapped Hoover on the back and said, "We have won our contention. The Belgians shall be fed."[17]

Why was it that whenever this vast feeding operation was threatened with stoppage by the military authorities the civilian cabinets intervened to insist upon its continuance? To Allen, the answer was easy--the force of public opinion. And of course there was only one method of obtaining such support and that was by keeping the public informed. Hoover had shown a keen appreciation of the weapon of publicity when he acknowledged how he had used it to protect the interests of the San Francisco World Exposition of 1915. Now he was using this potent weapon in a far greater cause and even more effectively.[18]

The day after Lloyd George's approval, the commission acted so promptly and decisively that it earned forevermore the respect of the warring governments and set itself as entirely competent to handle this vast undertaking.

The commission took over the charters of a fleet of wheat ships in the Estuary of the Thames and before night-fall, they were steaming for Rotterdam where their precious cargoes were transhipped by barges into Belgium. When the Chief met his volunteer publicity director on the street the next morning, he asked Allen how he felt to be jointly responsible for several million dollars worth of wheat bought on the credit of a commission which had no money and no immediate prospect of getting any. Allen responded that

it was great to have such a personal credit rating, for he had just been to the bank where he found that he had a balance of not too many dollars himself.

Belgian Relief

From the moment Hoover accepted the chairmanship of the C.R.B., he began forming his larger organization. He had ten million people to feed for how long no one knew. "The world's greatest wholesale-grocery business," Hoover jokingly called it afterward. He knew nothing about the grocery business; he set himself to learn.[19]

Hoover himself summed up the spirit and social utility of the new organization when he addressed the American Rhodes Scholars at Oxford who had volunteered for work in Belgium and were about to leave London. His parting words were:

> When this war is over, the thing that will stand out will not be the number of dead and wounded, but the record of those efforts which went to save life. Therefore, you should remember that in this duty you have not only a service to render to these people, but that you have a duty to this Commission, and above all that you have a duty to your own country. . . . Nothing has done more to make the benevolent neutrality of the United States a positive force in this appalling war than the work accomplished by the Commission for Relief in Belgium.[20]

It was necessary for Hoover, unbacked by any force not his own, to open up the closed diplomatic channels and to get food into Belgium within two weeks. How he found supplies and cargo space bound up in War Office red tape;

how when various towns were down to their last loaf he virtually stole the charters of three British ships; how when they were safe in Rotterdam harbor he confessed to Lloyd George what he had done; how that statesman responded: "I like your Yankee cheek, but if you had done this in any other cause I should have put you in jail."[21]

As a member of Hoover's staff on the C.R.B., Will Irwin reported on his own trip back to the United States in January, 1915, to help stimulate American giving. He admitted to getting all the publicity he could. Newspapers and magazines, scenting a story, began appealing for "personality stuff" on Hoover. He would stand for nothing of the sort. "Play up the need in Belgium; keep me out of it," he cabled. But those roving American correspondents, who during those blind early days braved military arrest in order to report on the war, saw the importance of the job and the man. They could not be restrained. Hoover took these first mentions as a kind of affront to his personal honor. It looked--so he appeared to feel--as though he were using the misery of ten million people to exploit himself. Yet in spite of himself his fame grew.

Upon returning to London, Irwin went to the office of the commission to find one of the directors laughing over a dispatch. "Here you are!" he exclaimed. "A little town in the Meuse district has named its main street after the Chief. He can't beat it!"[22]

The following story further illustrates the importance of public opinion in Hoover's mind.

In Northern France, the question of the native harvest was more complicated than in Belgium, since the French able-bodied peasants had joined the army before the invaders came. The Germans, supplementing the scant native labor, put reserve troops to work in the field and claimed part of the 1915 French crop.

But the harvest of 1916 was a different story. The British blockade was having its effect and the Germans needed more of the crop than they did in the preceding year. The Allies informed Hoover that they could not ship any additional food supplies to the French. Both sides refused to budge. As a result, Hoover had to journey to Berlin to try to find a solution.

On arrival, Hoover found the German leaders holding a conference. The extreme jingo party, headed by von Reventlow, had come to power.

That morning, the Berlin newspapers had published an erroneous story loaded with dynamite. Great Britain, it said inaccurately, was insisting that "the whole food crop should go to the inhabitants of the occupied countries--not a grain to the German Army that had helped to cultivate it." With few exceptions, the German leaders stood firm in their attitude on the French crop, and demanded that if the Allies did not yield, the C.R.B. must get out of Belgium.

Hoover had only a few hours to save ten million people from starving in Belgium and Northern France. He appealed to the Germans' sense of justice and humanity, and again drew his sharpest weapon--public opinion in the United States. Did the Germans realize how Americans felt about Belgium? Nothing would serve better to drive the United States into the arms of the Allies than the starvation of millions of children. The members of the conference reconsidered and cooled down.

Not only did the C.R.B. remain in Belgium, but Hoover softened the German attitude toward the disposal of the French crop. Hoover also managed to see that none of his human charges wanted for the bread of life.[23]

Bruce Barton tells how the work of the C.R.B. was threatened with submersion under an avalanche of officious Allied governmental supervision:

> "One day," said Barton, "the officials of the British Foreign Office sent Hoover a massive memorandum, pointing out that the C.R.B. was being conducted without due reference to the sacred traditions of red tape. It was a communication which must have taken hours to prepare, and the officials waited expectantly for the dignified missive which would come back."
>
> Hoover wrote in a single sentence:
>
> "It strikes me that trying to feed the Belgians is like trying to feed a hungry kitten by means of a forty-foot bamboo pole, said kitten confined in a barred cage occupied by two hungry lions."
>
> "There was apoplexy in the Foreign Office," concluded Barton, "when that note arrived, but never again did they try to dictate the procedure of the C.R.B."[24]

Hoover's experience with the C.R.B. laid the groundwork for his subsequent role as the U. S. Food Administrator. The men who began with the C.R.B. and followed Hoover through the Food Administration and later, the American Relief Administration, said that this first job was the greatest test of Hoover's power. First, it was pioneer work; later, he simply applied what he had learned in feeding Belgium.

Two features of the C.R.B. illustrate the confidence Hoover inspired when the European chancelleries came to know him. Between 1914 and 1917, Hoover was the only man who circulated freely and openly between the British Government and the German General Staff. The situation was so curious that the governments, syndicates, and societies concerned in the Belgian relief found it safer and more convenient to deal with an individual rather than with a government or an organization.

Secondly, seldom before in history had one man handled so much ready money in his own name. The total must have run into billions of dollars.[25] Hoover foresaw the day when he might be openly criticized for the fiscal matters relating to the commission. As a result, the leading firm of British accountants, headed by Sir John Plender, was drawn into the organization. It not only audited the books, but did all the bookkeeping with its own staff without remuneration. "Contributions of a few

dollars to a few million dollars poured in, usually in checks made out simply to 'H. C. Hoover.' Sometimes as much as fifty million dollars was deposited to his account. Not a dollar went astray."[26]

Hoover considered this matter to be important. It was one of his cardinal principles that the American public be kept informed of the way funds were obtained and how they were spent. This concern was later to pay dividends when Senator Reed of Missouri accused Hoover of using Belgian relief funds to "rig" wheat and other food markets in America, which raised prices to American consumers. Long before this argument came up on the floor of Congress, Hoover told his staff, "I do not want myself to handle any of these hundreds of millions of dollars, for some day some swine will turn up and say I have stolen it."[27] Other charges made against Hoover in a vain attempt to defeat the Food bill will be discussed in the next chapter.

By the end of 1916, the head of the C.R.B. could afford to let down a little. His diplomatic and financial battles were won. The C.R.B. was established in the habits of war. It had become so well and favorably known that the Germans in suppressing it would have ruined the accumulated effect of their propaganda among the neutrals. On the other side, millions had given to the relief of the destitute Belgians, and every American dollar or British pound made a friend for the C.R.B. The Allied soldier or

statesman who tried to hamper it would have been opposed by public opinion.[28]

Hoover did much traveling in Europe in connection with his official duties. He was one of the few individuals who could freely visit both sides of the battle line to negotiate diplomatic settlements and to supervise the distribution of food.

On a visit one day to a canteen for subnormal children in Brussels, Hoover stood by silently as 1,662 little boys and girls came crowding in, slipping into their places at the long narrow tables that cut across the great dining rooms. As he watched, his eyes filled with tears. The woman in charge and her husband, a physician, went among the children examining their throats or their eyes, taking them out to a little clinic for weighing, or carrying the youngest in their arms--while all the time the dozen white-uniformed young women hurried up and down the long rows, ladling out the potato stew and the rice dessert.

Hoover spoke these words: "The Women of Belgium have become the Mother of Belgium. In this room is the Relief of Belgium."[29]

The subsequent appointment of Hoover as U. S. Food Administrator and the methods which he used to enlist the voluntary support of the American people through acceptable performance and two-way communication is the public relations story which follows.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1]Herbert Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover (New York, 3 vols., 1952), 2:165.

[2]Vernon Kellogg, "Herbert Hoover As I Know Him," Outlook, 147:203-05 (October, 1927).

[3]Will Irwin, "Hoover As an Executive," Saturday Evening Post, March 27, 1920, p. 73.

[4]Kellogg, "Herbert Hoover As I Know Him," 206.

[5]Irwin, "Hoover As an Executive," 75.

[6]Victoria French Allen, "The Outside Man," unpublished biography of Ben S. Allen in typescript, 4 vols., Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, 2:139. Hereafter cited as Allen, "The Outside Man."

[7]Vernon Kellogg, "The Authentic Story of Belgian Relief," The World's Work, 34:175 (1917).

[8]Edward Eyre Hunt, "Hoover of the C.R.B.," The World's Work, 34:165-66 (1917).

[9]Hugh Gibson, "Herbert C. Hoover," The Century, XCIV:517 (1917).

[10]Mildred Houghton Comfort, Herbert Hoover, Humanitarian (Minneapolis, 1960), 39.

[11]Allen, "The Outside Man," 1:33-38.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., 1:101-04.

[14]Ibid., 2:145-46.

[15]Ibid., 2:147-49.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Herbert Corey, The Truth About Hoover (Cambridge, 1932), 258-59.

[18]Allen, "The Outside Man," 2:165.

[19]Irwin, "Hoover As an Executive," 75.

[20]Allen, "The Outside Man," 2:142-43.

[21]Irwin, "Hoover As an Executive," 73.

[22]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography (New York, 1928), 176-77.

[23]Ibid., 159-62.

[24]Quoted in Vernon B. Hampton, Breasting World Frontiers (Stapleton, New York, 1933), 38-39.

[25]Irwin, "Hoover As an Executive," 76.

[26]Eugene Lyons, Our Unknown Ex-President (New York, 1948), 155.

[27]New York Times, July 17, 1917, p. 3.

[28]Irwin, "Hoover As an Executive," 75.

[29]Vernon Kellogg, "Herbert Hoover, As Individual and Type," Atlantic, 382 (1918).

CHAPTER II

BEGINNING OF THE UNITED STATES FOOD ADMINISTRATION, 1917-1918

Food and the War

> . . . This is the time for America to correct her unpardonable faults of wastefulness and extravagance. Let every man and every woman assume the duty of careful, provident use and expenditure as a public duty, as a dictate of patriotism which no one can now expect ever to be excused or forgiven for ignoring.
>
> Woodrow Wilson[1]

Hoover's experience with the C.R.B. reinforced his belief in the value of winning world public opinion to support the massive program of feeding ten million people. It also taught him that the vigorous publicity campaign inaugurated by Ben Allen in connection with the C.R.B. was largely responsible for the success of the program in winning the support of the American people and the world at large.

Generally unknown was the fact that Germany had launched a new type of submarine in December, 1916, which could remain underwater longer than its predecessor. Ambassador Page felt reasonably certain that the United States would soon enter the war. Page took it upon himself to recommend to President Wilson that Hoover head

munitions production in the United States in case America had to fight. He did this through a personal friend, since the Ambassador was not on particularly friendly terms with Woodrow Wilson at the time.

After listening patiently, the President remarked, "You need not dwell on Hoover's qualities, I have been watching him. I'm keeping him in mind in case worst comes to worst. However, I'm not sure that munitions is the place for him. Perhaps he could serve better in some other capacity." Colonel House also admired Hoover's work in Belgium. When the crisis came, he added his own warm recommendation.[2]

On April 6, 1917, the day the United States declared war on Germany, Hoover received a message stating that President Wilson wanted him to return to the United States to take charge of the food organization. Hoover paid high tribute to the American volunteers who served with him on the C.R.B. One of them, Vernon Kellogg, wrote this of Hoover: "Those of us who have lived through the difficult, the almost impossible days of Belgian relief . . . have come to an almost superstitious belief in his capacity to do anything possible to human power. . . . People sometimes ask me why Hoover has such a strong hold on his helpers. The men of C.R.B. know."[3]

Two days before he was to sail from England, the Chief asked Allen to accompany him. It was a proud moment for Allen, but he said regretfully, "How can I without

giving more notice to the A.P.?"

He found this problem solved, since the Chief had already cabled Melville E. Stone asking for the loan of his London outside man. Allen never saw the reply to that cable, but a copy of the service message received by the A.P. office read, "Regretfully sanction Allen arrangement. Secure best available man to replace him in London."

Thus, Allen surrendered to others the beat that he had found to be one of the most interesting and stimulating ever trod by a reporter.

On April 18, the party headed by Hoover departed from Euston Station for Liverpool to board the steamship Philadelphia.[4]

Admiral Sir Douglas Brownrigg, Chief British Naval Censor, said of Allen, "Perhaps I saw more of Mr. Ben Allen during the early part of the war than any of his colleagues. Shortly after the United States joined in, however, he deserted us here and went over to join Mr. Hoover. I can only say that the Associated Press lost a good man, I lost a good friend, and Mr. Hoover won all the time."[5]

For two and a half years the C.R.B., which Hoover created and led, had fed ten million people in Belgium and Northern France. This relief enterprise was unprecedented in history. But within two more years "Hoover organizations," while still carrying on the Belgian work, would be

feeding more than a third of the civilized world.[6]

Hoover entered on his new task in public service with no illusions as to its extraordinary difficulties. He said, grimly, immediately after promising President Wilson that he would undertake it, "I will probably get hung up on the first barbed-wire entanglement." He also added:

> . . . The administering of the food of the American public in a great emergency by calling upon the loyal and patriotic cooperation of the food-producers and the food-handlers and food-consumers of America, in a word, of the whole American people, is not all trouble--it is partly a high experience which makes democracy possible and democratic government successful--the response of the great mass to the call for loyalty and sacrifice.[7]

This reliance upon the fundamental feeling, understanding, and loyalty of the mass of the people was one of Hoover's greatest assets.

On May 19, 1917, President Wilson issued this statement to the press to explain the policies of the Food Administration:

> It is very desirable, in order to prevent misunderstandings or alarms and to assure cooperation in a vital matter, that the country should understand exactly the scope and purpose of the very great powers which I have thought it necessary in the circumstances to ask the Congress to put in my hands with regard to our food supplies. Those powers are very great, indeed, but they are no greater than it has proved necessary to lodge in the other Governments which are conducting this momentous war, and their object is stimulation and conservation, not arbitrary restraint or injurious interference with the normal process of production. . . .
>
> I have asked Mr. Herbert Hoover to undertake this all-important task of food administration. He has expressed his willingness to do so on condition that he is to receive no payment for his services and that the

> whole of the force under him . . . shall be employed, so far as possible, upon the same volunteer basis. . . .[8]

Hoover followed this up by issuing his first press statement as U. S. Food Administrator and explained why he was opposed to the demands from some quarters for rationing and fixed retail prices. He concluded:

> . . . The whole foundation of democracy lies in the individual initiative of its people and their willingness to serve the interests of the Nation with complete self-effacement in the time of emergency. I hold that Democracy can yield to discipline and that we can solve this food problem for our own people and for our Allies largely by voluntary action. To have done so will have been a greater service than our immediate objective, for we have demonstrated the rightness of our faith and our ability to defend ourselves without being Prussianized.[9]

It was fundamental to the entire food program that the public should be kept advised of the facts which determined that program as well as the exact terms of the requests and directions for its achievement. Hoover felt that this could best and most directly be accomplished through the one great agency for disseminating information, the press of the country. From the outset, the Food Administration requested and received the cooperation of the press from the great dailies of the cities to the small country weeklies--from the larger magazines to the smallest trade journals.

The importance attached by the Food Administration to the support of the press is evidenced by the letter of appeal sent by Hoover to 2,500 members of the press

immediately after the creation of the Food Administration. It read in part:

> . . . The world as a whole is faced with a definite and growing food shortage which will have a most important bearing on our national life, not only as affecting our task of supporting our Allies in the war, but in its ultimate reactions upon our entire range of food industries and the life of our people. I recognize that to an intelligent people it is necessary to prove the case that such a shortage exists and will increase, and that this proof must be furnished as a basis for creating the dominant idea in the national mind that we must enlarge our food service to the world, not only as a war measure, but as a measure of humanity itself. If we can secure the placement of this idea in the minds of the people, the sequent suggestions of constructive order which we may make will fall not only on a receptive mind but upon a convinced intelligence. . . . We believe that we must first prove the case and then we must trust to the guidance of the press of the country to secure the awakening of the national conscience to the idea of food administration.
>
> To guide the public mind in these channels, we are wholly and absolutely dependent on the press of the country. If we do not receive this support, the problem is hopeless. If we do have it, it can be solved.[10]

Hoover believed that he could obtain results through the agencies of legitimate trade channels with the least possible disturbance to industry and commerce, and without resorting to drastic measures. He disclaimed the title of "Food Dictator" that had been conferred upon him by the newspapers, and said that he would ask only for the intelligent cooperation of all concerned.

Hoover had been in Washington nearly two months waiting for Congress to pass the Lever bill, or some kind of food control bill to give him power to proceed.

"Meanwhile, every trade and industry in the country having to do with food supply began besieging him, day and night, to relieve them of the suspense and doubt in which they were placed, and which was paralyzing their businesses and seriously threatening the actual food needs of both the United States and its Allies."[11]

In a letter to Congressman Lever, father of the Food Control bill, Hoover requested that the new bill be given the name of the Food Administration bill, which would be helpful in forming a more favorable public opinion. Hoover did not want the complexion of food dictator, or food controller to be conveyed, as this would immediately create opposition to the objectives of the Food Administration.[12]

Opposition in Congress

American dislike of food control grew out of the Congressional debates on the Gore and Lever bills embodying the President's recommendations, and the doubt of appointing Hoover or anyone else as food dictator. One Senator remarked, "You can call a man a 'food-administrator,' but if you give him unrestricted authority to do whatever he wants with your country's food-producing interests, it seems to me that he assumes the role of dictator."[13]

This discordant note came from Senator James A.

Reed, Democrat, of Kansas City, Missouri, a lawyer by profession. He made several violent attacks on the Lever Food bill as putting control of the whole food system of the country into the hands of one man, and demanded that no such power as it contemplated conferring was ever wielded by "a King, a potentate, a Czar, a Caesar, or a Kaiser." He further stated:

> . . . I do not intend to attack Mr. Hoover's integrity or his intelligence. I could not say a word against him as to that. But I do criticize him as a man who is woefully out of touch with American ideals and American principles. The trouble with Mr. Hoover is that he has lived abroad so long that he does not understand the needs of this country.
>
> I wish to discuss a man of flesh and blood, into whose hands it is intended to give these extraordinary powers. I want all the people of the country to realize the fact that a man who has lived outside the country for years is not the man to have such unqualified power to regulate their affairs. It is going too far when we are asked to substitute somebody, some Hoover, for the Constitution. I am opposed to it, and I shall do all I can to defeat this bill. . . .[14]

The same day, Senator Sherman of Illinois pointed out to members of the Congress certain conflicting statements on food supply issued by the Government's newest publication, known as the Official Bulletin, published daily by the CPI under order of President Wilson.

Senator Sherman invited attention to what he called two conflicting statements attributed to Secretary of Commerce Redfield and Attorney General Gregory dealing with the food shortage situation. Flourishing a copy of the Official Bulletin, Senator Sherman said:

> In order that certain public utterances may be properly elucidated for the information of the public on a subject that is leading to great precipitate action on the food question, I present in this copy of the Official Bulletin the parts which I have marked. One is from the Attorney General saying there is no danger, . . . and the other one from the Secretary of Commerce saying that we are in danger of ultimate starvation. I should like to have the Cabinet reconcile itself before it sends out statements to the public at this time that are calculated not only to cause a food panic but great confusion in attempting to escape from it.[15]

Senator Reed continued his attacks on Hoover in his fight to defeat the Food bill. In his strongest attack appearing in newspapers across the country, Reed accused Hoover of "rigging the American food market for benefit of the Belgians," and called upon the Senate not to pass legislation that would make a "food controller out of a gambler." The Missourian, in violent language, maintained that Hoover had used Belgian relief funds to "rig" wheat and other food markets in America with the effect of putting up prices to American consumers. Reed added:

> I don't charge Mr. Hoover with having gambled with this money for his own profit, but I do say that what he did was wrong, despicably wrong. He ran up prices on our people here to get food cheaper for the Belgians. He is the arch gambler of this day.[16]

While Senator Reed was talking, Senator Phelan of California called Hoover on the telephone to tell him of the Missourian's accusation. Later, Phelan told of this on the Senate floor:

> I talked with Mr. Hoover and told him what the gentleman from Missouri had said about his having gambled with the Belgian relief funds; Mr. Hoover was

> not excited about it. Now, if Mr. Hoover "gambled" with these funds it was done to save the starving people of Belgium. In fact, it was no gambling at all, but an effort to get advantageous prices in the expenditure of a vast sum of money that, to go the rounds, had to be expertly handled.

Senator Reed replied that if the Government was to spend millions for a food control administration, the authority should be vested in someone "who knows something about it." He exhibited a letter written by Hoover to the Pullman Company regarding the preparation and serving of food in dining cars. The letter, he declared, instructed the company to reduce portions, while prices were to remain unchanged.

The instructions prepared by Hoover for housewives of the country were also ridiculed by Reed in a sarcastic attack which caused laughter in the chamber and galleries and necessitated frequent calls for order. Reed criticized the suggestion to order bread twenty-four hours in advance, declaring that if Hoover had lived in this country longer he would know that the American housewife depended on the corner grocer, not on the baker.

John Beaver White, a member of President Wilson's American Committee of the C.R.B., declared that Senator Reed's charge was absolutely untrue. He added, "The purchases of foodstuffs in the United States for the Belgian relief have been made from the beginning absolutely by the American Committee. Neither Mr. Hoover nor the American

Committee ever speculated in any commodity purchased for the Belgian relief."[17]

The defense of Hoover in the mass media was quick and overwhelming. Reed could cause delay in the Senate, but he could not shake editorial confidence throughout the country in the "Savior of Belgium."

The New Republic said, "No other Senator is just at this moment making such a sorry show of himself on such a large scale. Others may mean more harm, and do it quietly in committee rooms, but Mr. Reed is doing his dirty work in public, and the public is paying him for doing it."[18]

The World's Work, a Page publication, reported, "There is no probability that Senator Reed is a German agent; there is not the slightest doubt, however, that his activities for the past year and a half have been more helpful to Germany than to the United States. . . . His attitude on food conservation has sufficiently demonstrated his hostility to the great enterprise in which we are engaged."[19]

The New York Times repeatedly criticized the delay in passing the Food bill and its series of amendments as not being in the public interest. The introduction of these changes was aimed to "prevent the President from appointing a man of his choice to this place, or else, if the President did appoint a man of his choice, to so handicap the man so that he would be helpless."[20]

Senator John Sharp Williams, of Mississippi, declared:

"Mr. President, if I had my way about this bill, I would appoint one man to take charge of this matter, and I would name him in the bill, and I would name Hoover. I would name him especially because of the absolutely uncalled for, unprovoked, and unjustified attacks that have been made upon him."[21]

Hoover was morbidly sensitive to publicity. It was said that he read religiously everything written about him, and all but memorized the unfavorable stories.[22] But as a businessman, Hoover was also concerned that all of the alarming food reports which appeared in the daily press simply served to send people to the nearest store to buy an extra supply of food, on the supposition that the stock was almost exhausted. The circulation of such alarming reports would do nothing but add fuel to the fire, cause people to buy and hoard more, and defeat the very objectives sought by the food program.[23]

While passage of the Food bill was meeting opposition in Congress, the campaign for food legislation gained impetus across the country. Representatives of organized labor, headed by Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), called on President Wilson at the White House and informed him that there was danger of serious unrest among the workingmen of the country unless

Congress, without further delay, adopted food administration legislation which would make possible an effective fight on inflated war prices. Full confidence was also expressed in the selection of Hoover.

As spokesman of the AFL, Gompers released the following statement to the press:

> We laid before the President the fact that the people of the United States, as we have had an opportunity to learn, have made frequent protests and complaints against the high cost of living, and have expressed an immediate need for legislation to meet the situation.
>
> Their wages have remained practically stationary, and the cost of living has gone up 100 to 200 per cent. Their tables are meager and they are doing the best they can under the circumstances--many are doing without proper nourishment.
>
> It is needful that this legislation be passed immediately, lest there be discontent among the people that will be of the greatest injury. . . .
>
> We found the President in hearty accord.[24]

President Wilson again urged that Congress stop its long debates over the urgent war legislation.

Senator Martin, Democratic Leader of the Senate, informed President Wilson that the fight was by no means partisan. He pointed out that many Democrats in the Senate were opposed to the Food bill and other legislation as a matter of principle, and that these attacks were not made against the President, but against the idea of allowing unrestricted power to be vested in only one individual.

An editorial in the June 16 New York Times referred

to Senator Reed's remarks as "preposterous," and indicated that a poll of the Senate revealed that a majority of that body favored passage of the bill "to protect the people against speculation by rational, practical means."[25]

Pending final approval of the Food bill, President Wilson decided in the interim that the food situation confronting the country was such as to preclude further delay. On June 17, the CPI released the President's letter to Hoover dated June 12, which read in part: ". . . It seems to me that the inauguration of that portion of the plan for food administration which contemplates a national mobilization of the great voluntary forces of the country which are ready to work toward saving food and eliminating waste admits of no further delay."[26]

This gave Hoover full authority to undertake any steps necessary for the proper organization and stimulation of his program, and was accepted by the press as evidence that President Wilson was satisfied that he would receive the authority for his Food Administration as included in the Lever bill. This subsequently proved to be the case as the Food Control Act became law on August 10, 1917.

The heated arguments which took place over restricting the use of food grains in the making of alcoholic beverages merits additional consideration as part of the public relations problem it created in food conservation and will be covered in a later section. It

will suffice here to say that the amendment was defeated.

Hoover's Aims

Even with Congressional opposition to the Food bill and the personal attacks made against him, Hoover escaped relatively unscathed as far as his personal reputation was concerned. The necessity of "food-control" and an "administrator," to use the President's and Hoover's words, was recognized by the press on every hand. As the Springfield Republican soberly summed up the situation in its June 17 issue: "Unless the country will permit its food resources to be organized and managed on a scientific war basis by competent men with sufficient authority to meet emergencies, it might as well wire to the Kaiser that it is already anxious to make a separate peace."

Editorials like "Hoover is the Man," and "The Right Man for the Place" were common. The New York Globe summed it up by saying, "The work Mr. Hoover has done and the study he has made of similar work in Europe arm him against mistakes and for sound measures, while the confidence of the nation reposes in him, assures a hearty cooperation no untried man could command." Equal satisfaction was felt by the Allies, who had a vital interest in food. Mr. Kennedy Jones, English Director of Food Economy, reported by dispatch to the New York Times: "There are doubtless Generals coming from America who will win fame on

the battlefields of France, but in Mr. Hoover, President Wilson already has a General who for more than two years faced the actualities of war and achieved victories in its most complex phase, namely, the rationing /feeding/ of nations."[27]

Other favorable reports as reflected in the newspapers and magazines gave Hoover an excellent sounding board of the general feelings and opinions of the public. Letters of congratulation also poured in and provided the new Food Administrator with additional confidence and hope felt by Americans that, in this period of national emergency, the best the nation had would respond to its call.

One such letter came from Ambassador Page, who said in part:

> . . . But again, you appear to the American public, preaching food-economy with power to enforce the sermon. That's a miracle which, I confess, I never expected to see performed. But in a world that contains you and the war, I have come to believe that anything must happen. The American people economical of food! I can scarcely believe that yet.[28]

To avoid any possible misunderstanding, both President Wilson and Hoover clearly outlined their food-control program in public statements to the press. It was proposed to draw a sharp line between the normal activities of the Department of Agriculture and the emergency food control measures necessitated by the war. President Wilson explained that these control measures would continue only

while the war lasted.

Hoover found himself in an office of large responsibility with limited authority and funds, and with the people looking to him for results. He called for volunteers to man his office, and appealed to the nation through the press to support him in his efforts to wipe out waste, repress unnecessary consumption, stimulate production, control profiteering, and send over increasing numbers of shiploads of food to the Allies and our armies. If "food will win the war" was a slogan too broad for literal acceptance, it was at least certain that lack of food might lose the war. The Food Controllers of England, France, and Italy made this plain to the Food Administrator of America. They urged that the United States be forcibly rationed, as were their people. But Hoover insisted that the American people would respond to voluntary efforts without the legal restraints, the high cost, and the waste of manpower as experienced in the rationing systems of Europe.[29]

The belief was expressed by many that the best way to save food would be to increase price levels in those commodities in which it was desired to reduce consumption. However, Hoover believed that reduction of consumption to the extent required by increasing prices would simply place certain commodities out of the reach of those classes who did not have the purchasing power, and that this concept

was simply conservation for the rich at the expense of the poor.[30]

Hoover announced the objectives of the Food Administration to the country through the press. Basically, he emphasized three general areas--to guide the trades in the fundamental food commodities so as to eliminate vicious speculation, extortion, and wasteful practices; and to stabilize prices in the essential staples--to guard our exports so that we would retain sufficient supplies for our own people and to cooperate with the Allies to prevent inflation of prices--and to stimulate in every manner the production and saving of our food so that we might increase our exports to the Allies to enable them to properly feed their armies and their peoples.[31]

Hoover further amplified on these aims when he later addressed the Pittsburgh Press Club. He stated in part:

> The Food Administration is purely a war institution. Its first and primary concern is the feeding of our own people and those of the Allies, and thereby the maintenance of the strength of all the men, women, and children both there and here, and thus the strong arm of our soldiers.
>
> The reduction of consumption during this year has been vital. To secure it we had three alternatives of action:
>
> First. Rationing.
>
> Second. By bidding up prices in the purchase of Allies' supplies until the consumption falls.
>
> Third. By obtaining a voluntary reduction of the individual consumption, simpler living, economy in

> waste, substitution of commodities we have in greater abundance for those we need to export.
>
> In considering the whole problem, we determined upon a line not hitherto applied and the success of which we believe will be one of the remembered glories of the American people in this titanic struggle. That is, that we should place the reduction of consumption on a voluntary basis.
>
> Voluntary conservation has . . . a moral side to my mind, of some importance. By it we are appealing directly for the self-sacrifice of the people of the United States to the carrying on of the war. I do not believe that there is another nation in the world in which the proportion of individuals of a willing sense of self-sacrifice is so high as in this people of ours and in which a sufficient voluntary reduction could be obtained.[32]

His favorite and now famous short summary explained the rules of the game to the public: "Go back to simple food, simple clothes, simple pleasures. Pray hard, work hard, sleep hard and play hard. Do it all courageously and cheerfully. We have a victory to win."[33]

Food Organization for War

It is my purpose here to briefly highlight that part of Hoover's organization which primarily concerned itself with the information and education functions of food conservation. I shall not go into great detail on the organization of the various other directorates and divisions within the Food Administration.

Credit is generally given to Hoover, who, though he possessed coercive powers, preferred to educate and persuade the American public to his ways. His organizing

and administrative abilities were strengthened both by the choice of capable subordinates and by the complete confidence and backing of President Wilson.

Hoover continuously sought the engineer's by-pass to a working result. He sought the solution to national problems as he might tackle a mining difficulty. First in mind was the question to be settled; then the process of investigation and analysis and fact-finding; thirdly, synthesis, the weighing of these facts and evaluating and reconciling them; and finally, a review of the problem as a whole in light of exact knowledge instead of supposition of facts which existed before the survey.[34]

From the standpoint of the Food Administration's working relationship with other governmental agencies, Hoover realized that something had to be done to coordinate all governmental departments dealing with war problems into one cohesive body. What Hoover suggested was a War Cabinet, made up of the heads of the permanent departments: the Secretaries of State, War, Navy, and Treasury. These leaders, as a basic group, were to be combined with the heads of the Munitions, Food, Fuel, Shipping, Railways, and War Trade Administrations. Hoover presented his plan to Dr. Harry A. Garfield, head of the Oil and Fuel Agency, who presented the plan to President Wilson. Garfield had some difficulty in convincing the President that it was necessary, practical, and expedient. However, the President

eventually bought the idea and designated this group as the "War Council."[35]

The Education Division

Hoover's next step was to get his own "internal house" in order without the ceremonial making of organization charts with circles, squares, and converging solid and dotted lines to show where everything belonged. At a staff meeting one morning, Hoover said:

> This is an emergency organization and a new operation. Every day we must meet new problems. Therefore, my notion of organization is to size up the problem, send for the best man or woman in the country who has the "know how," give him a room, table, chair, pencil, paper, and waste basket--and the injunction to get other people to help and solve it. When that problem is out of the way, we shall find plenty more.[36]

The organization in Washington grew from fifteen members to more than fifteen hundred in the course of two years. An additional volunteer staff of 50,000 persons participated within the state agencies which were formed in the summer of 1917.[37]

Hoover brought with him a nucleus of the staff which had served with him on the C.R.B., to include Ben Allen, who was designated as Chief of the Education Division.

Realizing that the food program depended on voluntary methods and winning over the will of the people, Hoover insured that the new organization had an adequate publicity staff. Posters, magazines, and motion pictures

were all later used, but by far the greatest assistance came from the newspapers.[38] Hoover stated that he found in the American people exactly what he expected--a wealth of cooperation. Saving food became a sort of game. Parents took advantage of it to impose upon their children the disciplines which had been the griefs of their own youth--and blamed it all on Hoover.[39]

Although the methods used by Hoover to win public acceptance will be covered in greater detail later, one of the Food Administration's principal weapons, publicity, did a great deal to promote food conservation.

There was an intense interest on the part of the people in all of the steps taken by the government for winning the war, and most of the information relating to the war had news value. The military preparations could not be fully disclosed in the public press, but the work of the Food Administration could and had to be given wide publicity. The furnishing of this information could not be left to chance interviews with Hoover and his advisers. Although Hoover personally reviewed the food situation with press representatives at weekly meetings, he was also available whenever information of special importance was desired by members of the press. Ben Allen, as the Education Director, was charged with the responsibility for the systematic gathering and release of information to the press.[40]

The newspaper representatives were given every assistance possible in getting accurate and complete information. They gave evidence of their appreciation by making a special effort to give publicity to news of the Food Administration.

Sections within the Education Division prepared articles and furnished appropriate information to publications which served special clienteles. These sections were broken out into Women's Journals and Women's Pages, Trade Journals, Farm Journals and Country Weeklies, Religious Journals, Negro Press, and Labor Publications. These sections were directed by volunteer editors and writers experienced in each type of publication served. Personnel were loaned by publications of each class and were therefore familiar with the interests of the special publics involved.

A plate service was also maintained (photographs, matrices, and cuts) for the great numbers of newspapers throughout the country receiving material. Instructive and suggestive articles "targeted" the audience and reached various parts of the public not otherwise covered by the daily press releases sent to the newspapers.[41]

The Education Division functioned under the Food Conservation Directorate, headed by Ray Lyman Wilbur. Ben Allen had eight assistants in Messrs. Fred O'Brien, Tom Ellis, Russell MacLennan, Roger S. Baldwin, Leonard Hatch,

Charles Merz, Parmely Herrick, and Miss Ida Tarbell. Everett W. Smith was in charge of the Copy Desk; Everett S. Brown and F. C. Woodward had the Press Digest; R. C. Maxwell handled Outdoor Advertising; and Dean Olin Templin was Director of Schools and College Activities. Other members of the Education Division were as follows:[42]

Dr. Charles R. Van Hise--Collegiate

Charles W. Holman--Farm Journals

John S. Pardee--Bulletins

Lloyd Allen)
Mrs. Alice Allen)--Mat Service
R. W. Madison)

Edith Guerrier--Library and Exhibits

A. S. Friend--Moving Pictures

A. U. Craig--Negro Press

Henry B. Quinan--Posters

Dr. Howard B. Grose--Religious Press

Mrs. Gertrude Mosshart--Retail Stores

James H. Collins)
)--Trade and Technical Press
Trell W. Yocum)

Federal Food Administrators were appointed for every state, for Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, and for the New York area, Philadelphia County, and St. Louis. State and Regional Educational Directors were established at the same time to handle press releases and other campaign instructions received from Ben Allen and his

Washington office.[43]

During the period of the Food Administration, Hoover was often at his desk by half-past seven in the morning, and even at midnight his light still burned. Assistants much younger found that they could not follow his pace. "Where he gets that inner strength," they would say, "the Lord only knows!"

Lewis Strauss, his secretary during this period, related a story about one of these long days which illustrates Hoover's vitality. Having begun work at half-past seven in the morning, both left the office at half-past seven in the evening. Strauss, worn out, got a quick dinner and tumbled into bed. Arriving at the office the next day, he found that his desk had been unlocked and rifled of certain important and confidential papers. "Enemy spies!" he thought, and was about to telephone the Secret Service, when Hoover entered from his office. "I picked the lock of your desk after dinner last night," he remarked; "needed some of those papers."[44]

With America at war, Washington was at once jammed by the new agencies of government. The Food Administration started out initially in the Willard Hotel, then moved to a few rooms in the Interior Department, then completely occupied an old hotel, the Gordon. It finally moved into a newly constructed two-story wall building, which accommodated an office force of two thousand employees.[45]

Thus organized, the Education Division of the Food Administration was in business as a weapon of war.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/271.

[2]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 187-88.

[3]Quoted in Dorothy H. McGee, Herbert Hoover (New York, 1965), 165.

[4]Allen, "The Outside Man," 4:399.

[5]Ibid., 2:153.

[6]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 188.

[7]Kellogg, "Herbert Hoover," 380-81.

[8]Hoover, Memoirs, 2:251.

[9]Ibid., 2:252.

[10]Mullendore, History, 83.

[11]The Bellman, XXIII, No. 565 (June, 1917), 678.

[12]New York Times, May 22, 1917, p. 1.

[13]"How Hoover Will Help Win," The Literary Digest 54:1689 (June 2, 1917).

[14]New York Times, June 15, 1917, p. 1.

[15]Ibid., 4.

[16]New York Times, July 17, 1917, p. 3.

[17]Ibid.

[18]The New Republic, XI, No. 142 (July 21, 1917), 516-17.

[19]The World's Work, XXXV, No. 4 (February, 1918), 356.

[20]New York Times, July 24, 1917, p. 5.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Delbert Clark, Washington Dateline (New York, York, 1941), 167.

[23]The Bellman, XXII, No. 564 (May, 1917), 481.

[24]New York Times, June 12, 1917, p. 1.

[25]New York Times, June 16, 1917, p. 6, 10.

[26]New York Times, June 17, 1917, p. 1.

[27]"How Hoover Will Help Win," The Literary Digest, 54:1689 (June 2, 1917).

[28]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/1.

[29]Kellogg, "Herbert Hoover As I Know Him," 239-44.

[30]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/1.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid., Box 1-D/276.

[33]Hoover, Memoirs, 2:250.

[34]Hampton, Breasting World Frontiers, 75.

[35]Comfort, Herbert Hoover, Humanitarian, 116.

[36]Hoover, Memoirs, 2:242.

[37]Mullendore, History, 355.

[38]"Wasting Less Food," The New Republic, XIV, No. 173 (February 23, 1918), 107.

[39]Hoover, Memoirs, 2:250.

[40]Mullendore, History, 84.

[41]Ibid., 85.

[42]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/1; also Mullendore, History, 358.

[43]National Archives Guide (Washington, 1948), 7.

[44]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 249-50.

[45]Hoover, Memoirs, 2:253-54.

CHAPTER III

PUBLICITY MEDIA AND METHODS

> . . . I therefore in the national interest take the liberty of calling upon every loyal American to take fully to heart the suggestions which are being circulated by the Food Administration and of begging that they be followed.
>
> Woodrow Wilson[1]

In order to induce people to change their eating habits, Hoover felt that education in the elementary facts of nutrition had to be undertaken and vigorously pursued. Following the instructions from President Wilson to take steps immediately to conserve the country's food supply, Hoover issued an appeal to American housewives in July, 1917, telling them that they might well prove to be the deciding factor in winning the war against Germany. "Food," he said, "will decide the war." Eighty per cent of the food in the country passed through their hands; therefore, their full cooperation was at once solicited. Hoover included in his message: ". . . Two cents on each meal every day for each person will save the nation a sum equal to the first Liberty Loan issue. A single pound of bread saved weekly from each person will increase the country's wheat exports 100,000,000 bushels within a year."[2]

While the housewife was of first importance, the men and children formed the larger part of the consuming public. As such, their assistance was also needed. The two elements of this problem were: first, to inform the consumer of the action desired, pointing out where waste and luxury occurred and how it might be remedied; and, second, the importance of educational appeals. Every means of disseminating the requests of the Food Administration was used.

As Will Irwin wrote:

> Hoover appealed to the people. A vast campaign to save food and enlist the aid of every housewife in the land was launched in his name. He mobilized not only business but journalism; gathered into his department as volunteers eminent editors, advertising specialists, poster-artists, cartoonists. Soon this retiring and once unknown businessman's name was a household word--the root for that new slang verb, "to Hooverize," to economize in the use of food.[3]

In June and July, 1917, Hoover asked representatives of the established agencies of society through which groups of people might be reached to meet with him in Washington to lend their assistance. These agencies included the following: churches, schools, colleges, normal schools and universities, clubs, lodges, and all fraternal organizations; merchants' associations, retail and wholesale, and other trade organizations; advertising clubs, and other commercial organizations; libraries; transportation companies, both rail and water; and hotels, restaurants, and other eating places.[4]

In addition to using these established organizations for reaching consumers, Allen and his Education Division also appealed to people directly through every available medium. The overall public relations efforts evolved around four main methods:

> First, the press of the country was used for the most important direct daily communication of information concerning the developing program in all the divisions of the Food Administration work.
>
> Second, the most important and effective method for directly reaching the women of the country was the personal canvass for membership in and pledges to the Food Administration.
>
> Third, advertising--perhaps the most spectacular and best known medium used--presented the visual appeal through electric signs, signs on billboards, in street railway cars, railroad coaches, and every space where the eye of the public would be reached. This advertising campaign also included the valuable cooperation of the moving-picture theater.
>
> Fourth, speakers were used both locally and nationally to present the appeal verbally to various audiences.[5]

Hoover chose the members of his administration with great care, especially those to serve in the Education Division. He picked these persons with the same instinct for capacity and devotion which he had shown in selecting his key business staff. Among them, these experts on public opinion evolved the motto, "Food Will Win The War!" which seemed to assail the national conscience in time of crisis.[6]

The Food Pledge Drives

Hoover asked that the work of registering the women throughout the country be started immediately and be continued intensively for fifteen days. Each woman who promised to enter the food-saving army would receive a tag to be displayed in the window, bearing the national shield. It was Hoover's hope to have one of these tags displayed in every home, and each woman would be asked to sign a pledge.

In enlisting the aid of housewives to become members of the Food Administration, Hoover also declared:

> It is proposed to divide this vast army into states, and direct its activities through the state organizations and state officials. Advice and instructions of national character will be added to those of the state and local organizations. Instructions will thus be handed down to individual members from time to time.[7]

The mobilization of the American housewife with Hoover as field marshal was to prove one of the major factors in the overall success of the Food Administration.

To solicit the aid of the housewife, the Food Administration launched its first big publicity campaign to provide information on policies of waste, the reduction of consumption, the substitution of local commodities for those from further away, the substitution of ever-abundant commodities for those destined for export to our Allies, instructions in the intelligent purchase and use of foodstuffs, and to set public opinion against waste and

extravagance in public places. In outlining his plan of organization, Hoover said, "I believe that the whole foundation of democracy lies in the individual initiative of its people. . . . I also feel that we have as much right to call upon them to serve in this administration as we have a right to call upon our men to serve in the trenches."[8]

In explaining the role of the Food Administration, Hoover also made it clear that he was not a General in command giving orders, and that in asking for self-sacrifice, the Food Administration should tell in a clear and direct way the "why and wherefore" of every request.[9]

The first food pledge campaign began in July, 1917, and lasted for eight weeks. This first campaign reached only a minority of housewives because it was impossible to build the proper organization throughout the country and disseminate complete instructions within such a short time. The method of distributing the home cards was also unsatisfactory. It did, however, serve to introduce the Food Administration to every community and laid the basis for the second and more intensive campaign.

During August through October, an organization of nearly 500,000 workers was built up within states, counties, and towns, with committees and soliciting teams in practically every town in the United States. These volunteer workers made a house to house canvass and asked

housewives to join the Food Administration by signing a pledge card. This campaign was conducted in conjunction with the second Liberty Loan drive. In launching both drives, Hoover said: "It is fortunate that these two campaigns, the one marshaling the nation's financial resources and the other aiming to conserve its food supply, should be dated simultaneously. The interests of these two campaigns interlock: both must succeed."[10]

The door to door canvassing of homes proved to be most successful. It is interesting to note that many housewives, particularly those living in certain sections of the East Coast, did not understand English. As a result, special representatives with ability to speak German, Russian, Italian, and other foreign languages were selected to visit these homes. Through personal communication, they explained the purposes of the food program and enlisted the services of these foreign-speaking housewives.

The press and cooperating organizations, i.e., schools, churches, and clubs, also intensified their efforts during the pledge period. By the end of October, fourteen million homes in the United States, out of an estimated twenty million, were actively listed as members of the Food Administration.[11]

A home card was given to participating households. One side contained a statement of the reasons for the requests made, and a summary of the task of food saving and

America's duty toward the Allies. On the other side, detailed directions were given as to the commodities to be saved, and suggestions were provided for food substitution. Housewives were especially encouraged to save wheat, meat, butter, pork products, and sugar.

As the necessity for saving became more pressing, the home program was changed and made more comprehensive. It subsequently became necessary to change the home cards to meet this new program. In addition to asking for one wheatless meal each day and the sparing of meats, milk, fats, and sugar, the second home program added a wheatless day each week and one meatless meal each day. Housewives were also cautioned against hoarding of foodstuffs.[12]

Concurrently with the food pledge drive in the United States, the cooperation of Canada was also solicited. W. J. Hanna, Food Controller in Ottawa, requested information from Hoover on the type of campaign to be conducted so that a similar plan could be instituted in Canada. On July 12, Hoover sent Hanna a telegram acquainting him with the general outline of the campaign with emphasis on the particular publics which had been targeted. Hoover also indicated heavy reliance on his publicity staff by stating:

> . . . Do not plan to pay for advertising, but will use posters and food bulletins. Some commercial associations will advertise certain phases of food administration. Have publicity staff, including moving pictures, posters. All newspapers and periodicals willing to give widest publicity to our work. . . .[13]

Although the importance of feedback will be discussed later in this chapter, Hoover found one letter of particular importance--so important, in fact, that he distributed it to key members of his staff with a short note, "Take heed.":

> . . . I have talked with a number of women since seeing you, and they all agree that the reason some of them don't get hold of your propaganda is that you and your men are always talking about thousands and millions of bushels, and they want to get down to concrete small quantities. . . . There is a vast difference between what is said by the Food Administration and what is said by Herbert Hoover. The women believe in you, and they will follow a personal word from you where they overlook anything signed by the administration.
>
> Most complaints say the same thing: "My husband won't eat this or that--I try to conserve but either he laughs or is grouchy." . . . The men have got to have a jolt; they have got to be told, and may have to be held up publicly too.[14]

Hoover was elated by the success of the overall pledge campaign and the general acceptance of food conservation appeals which were sent out by his office. The American temperament included adaptiveness, a willingness more prompt than among other peoples to dismiss the old and try the new.[15] Hoover himself summed up the results by saying, "We found in the American people exactly what we expected--a wealth of cooperation. Sometimes the public did too much. In one emergency I asked for a saving of fats and butter. The people saved so much that the trades were demoralized, we flooded the Allies, and I had to retreat."[16]

The Press

Without prompting, newspapers fell into line. Based on the request from Hoover for cooperation and newspaper coverage, Ben Allen found it necessary to start a clipping service to keep up with the extensive cross-country news coverage. The reaction of the press to the policies of the Food Administration, as well as the publicity which its activities were receiving, was checked daily. Misunderstandings caused by erroneous information and misinterpretation were cleared up in many instances through direct communication with the editors.[17]

One example of Hoover's technique in dealing with editors on misinterpretation is reflected in a letter sent by Hoover to Mr. A. J. Freudenfeld, Advertising Manager of the Minneapolis Commercial West:

> Your letter of the 25th in regard to my communication of the 23rd is at hand. Permit me to convey appreciation of the approbation of the course we are trying to pursue down here which you express in your letter. It is good to feel that one has support from substantial members of the press. My statement of the 23rd was sent to you because it did seem to me that the third paragraph of your editorial, "How Can We Stabilize Farming?" did not interpret my position on agricultural matters quite accurately. I felt confident you would not wish your readers to have any but a correct idea of my attitude, and thought that a statement from me would clarify the situation.[18]

This straightforward approach usually brought about corrective action on the part of the newspaper concerned. Hoover signed all such letters himself. It is interesting to note that the signature of Ben Allen does not appear on

any of these letters to editors, although he undoubtedly wrote most of them for Hoover's signature. Later, when Hoover became Secretary of Commerce, most of these letters were signed by Hoover's executive secretary. This may or may not be a point here, but it does indicate Hoover's keen interest in publicity during his first major public office.

As Government grew, more correspondents in Washington came to report on its activities. The press release, or "handout," became a major product of the governmental factory.[19]

As an agency of the Government, the Food Administration worked closely with the CPI on matters involving public information, especially in those matters requiring approval of the White House. Whenever President Wilson's name was used in connection with the food program, either as an appeal to the public or as the result of some action recommended by Hoover, the CPI disseminated the information to the press. George Creel, as head of the CPI, was the chief coordinator of a trained force of news gatherers accredited to and trusted by both the Government and the one thousand newspapermen in Washington.[20]

Allen kept his State Directors of Education advised of the best way to handle particular news items associated with the various campaigns. He generally included this guidance in the form of recommendations in the first part of a press release, followed in turn by the hard news of

the story itself. One example appeared in Press Release No. 78, dated June 23, 1917, which announced wheatless-meatless-and porkless days to the public:

> Your attention is called to the fact that there are two things in the newspapers which must be changed every day whether there is any news or not--the date-line and the weather report. I think it would be a good idea to get your papers to agree to put in one or the other, or both these places, the fact that the day is wheatless, meatless, or porkless--whatever it may happen to be--so that readers may be reminded each day that the Food Administration expects observance of these days.
>
> It has been aptly said, "There is a job for everyone, and this is ours." It seems to me that this can be made to apply particularly to newspapers in response to this request.[21]

The Education Division disseminated 1,400 press releases during the period of its existence. These releases were dated and numbered consecutively as a matter of reference, and Allen provided subordinate state information representatives with complete sets periodically to keep them appropriately informed. He also advised that indices for the press releases in volumes of one hundred each would also be provided them by mail. For the purpose of utilizing these releases, Allen suggested that the back releases be divided in volumes of 1 to 100, 101 to 200, 201 to 300, 301 to 400, and 401 to 500. When the numbers reached the 600 mark, 501 to 600 would then be indexed in similar fashion and mailed. This system was followed throughout the entire period of the Food Administration.[22]

News which dealt with topics requiring expert

knowledge was submitted to and approved by the individual or office handling the commodity before it was released to the press. Likewise, special articles for journals, magazines, and trade papers were reviewed and edited by those in charge of the work under consideration. As such, inaccuracies were guarded against.[23]

Hoover commented on the cooperation of the press by saying, "Local history is being written by the newspapers all over the United States. The history of Food Conservation in this country will be known to future generations as one of the greatest victories of democracy."[24] Hoover believed that food would win the war and that the lack of it could bring defeat. For this reason, he stressed that intelligent education along conservation lines could not be overestimated.

Motion Pictures

A direct appeal to the volunteer spirit of the people of the country was also made by motion pictures and was handled through the courtesy of the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry and its allied organization, the Associated Motion Picture Advertisers. In recognition of this public service, the Food Administration announced publicly on June 18 that Hoover had accepted the patriotic offer of the motion picture industry in aiding the women of the country and educating the general public in what and

what not to do with pressing food problems. The importance of this method of direct appeal was one of the most popular of the various media employed.[25]

Short reels of pictures depicting food conservation in the home were made with the assistance of leading motion picture stars and distributed by three important newsreel distributors. The cost of producing and distributing these pictures was contributed by the distributing companies. A few longer reels enforcing and illustrating food suggestions were made in Hollywood by the Food Administration at its own expense. Short, humorous cartoons were utilized, and a series of lantern slides bearing the messages of conservation were widely used in theaters and meeting halls throughout the country. Distribution and use of all these pictures by colleges, schools, and social and civic organizations was encouraged and aided by educational directors in the various states.[26]

Educational Channels

The educational institutions of the country, from the grammar schools to the universities and colleges, cooperated in helping to solve food conservation problems. The organization of these educational forces was directed by the School and Collegiate Section of the Education Division, in coordination with the U. S. Board of Education in Washington, D. C.

The elementary and secondary schools were of special assistance because the lessons in saving food impressed upon the children in school not only were observed by them at home but were carried to other members of the family as well.

On August 23, 1917, President Wilson directed a special appeal to school officers as follows:

> . . . In order that there may be definite material at hand, I have asked Mr. Hoover and Commissioner Claxton to organize the proper agencies for the preparation and distribution of suitable lessons for the elementary grades and for the high school classes. Lessons thus suggested will serve the double purpose of illustrating in a concrete way what can be undertaken in the schools and of stimulating teachers in all parts of the country to formulate new and appropriate materials drawn directly from the communities in which they live.[27]

Three sets of reading lessons were instituted: the first for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades; the second for the seventh and eighth grades of the elementary schools and the first year of high school; and the third set for the three upper classes in high school.

In addition, from October 1917 to May 1918, three leaflets, each of thirty-two pages, were issued on a monthly basis to schools by the U. S. Board of Education. The individual leaflets were the work of a number of men connected with the educational institutions in the country. These leaflets, entitled "Lessons in Community and National Life," were not confined to food conservation alone but were, as suggested by the President, related to the child's

duties toward citizenship in general. Special emphasis, however, was given to the food conservation program as illustrative of the type of national service that could be performed in time of peace as well as in war. They were issued in sufficiently large numbers so that the needs of schools could be supplied at a small cost, and state, county, and city superintendents of schools assisted in the distribution and utilization of them.[28]

Using the educational channels thus created, the Food Administration set up a campaign known as the U. S. School Garden Army of 1918 for the promotion of school-directed home gardening throughout the country. The U. S. Bureau of Education conducted the campaign and enlisted five million boys and girls and forty thousand teacher-directors. It was estimated that $250,000,000 worth of food could be produced by this method. This would give four million families of five persons each all the fresh vegetables needed through spring, summer, and fall, and provide half as much canned and dried vegetables as they would need through the winter. This effort resulted in the release of millions of bushels of wheat and thousands of tons of pork and beef for shipment to feed our soldiers and our Allies overseas.

One teacher-director was assigned for every company of 150 boys and girls. These teachers assisted in finding such places as back yards, side yards, and vacant lots for

use as gardens. They directed and helped the boys and girls in preparing the ground for planting, in selecting and planting seeds at the right time, in cultivating, harvesting, canning, drying, and in preserving the vegetables produced. The teachers visited all gardens under their direction at least once every two weeks, giving help as needed.

Boards of Education, Chambers of Commerce, Councils of Defense, Women's Clubs, and other patriotic bodies provided money necessary to pay the supervisors and supplemented salaries of the teachers who assumed the duties and responsibilities as directors. The boys and girls, teacher-directors, and supervisors in this Army wore a cloth bar with the letters U.S.S.G.A. embroidered on it, as evidence that they were members of the School Garden Army and doing their share toward winning the war for freedom and democracy.

Not only did this effort help feed our own people at home and our soldiers and Allies abroad, but many of the students made enough money to buy War Saving Stamps and thus contributed in providing the supplies and munitions of war.[29]

Courses of study in the higher educational institutions began in the normal schools and summer schools in July, 1917, and were extended into the regular terms by use of special course materials prepared by the School and

Collegiate Section of the Food Administration. This effort was also coordinated with the U. S. Bureau of Education and the States Relations Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Shortly after Hoover was placed in charge of food conservation work, he requested Dr. C. R. Van Hise, President of the University of Wisconsin, to come to Washington. Hoover asked Van Hise to organize the special work of arousing all universities and teachers of the country and showing them exactly where they could do the most effective work. Van Hise wrote of the role he played in food conservation and the contribution made by higher institutions of learning in an office memorandum dated December 20, 1917:

> Discussed broadly with him [Hoover] . . . policies to be pursued. It was arranged before leaving that when the food administration law was passed I should be called into service. There was delay in the passage of this law, but near the end of the college year I received a telegram urging that I represent the Food Administration at the meeting of the National Education Association at Portland, Oregon. Did so, and gave one address before the general association and two before sections; also addresses before Association of Commerce, City Club, and in church. . . .
>
> After law was enacted . . . , was again requested to come to Washington. At that time was placed in charge of organization of work in higher educational institutions, universities, colleges, normal schools, and technical schools . . . , some 900 in number.[30]

By October, Van Hise had sent out one-half of this special course material. The other half, 250 pages in

length, was distributed on January 1, 1918. These lectures and facts provided the colleges and universities with information on the importance of saving food to win the war.

Allen was among the first to recommend that Hoover, in his desire to educate the public in food conservation measures, exploit the channels of communication aimed through the extension workers at agricultural colleges and universities to the farmers. Materials were sent to extension employees for use in preparing lectures and addresses in acquainting farmers with the international scope of food problems. In doing so, Hoover made it clear that the Department of Agriculture had primary responsibility for the production of food commodities while being grown or raised on the farm. The Food Administration took over this responsibility when food products were ready to leave the farm for shipment to markets. These were simple words understood by the average farmer--and one of the secrets of Hoover's success.

As an adjunct to the educational campaign, another creative information outlet involved the nation's library system. Every library was enlisted to serve in the cause of food conservation. Each state had its own Library Publicity Directors appointed by the State Federal Food Administrator to supervise work by librarians, encourage

exhibits, and cooperate closely with the Food Administration in Washington.[31]

In order to place sufficient emphasis on this aspect of the public relations effort, Hoover directed a personal appeal to the librarians throughout the country on October 5, 1917, asking for their loyal support:

> Libraries are so organized as to get in touch with rich and poor, young and old. . . . The Food Administration will establish with you a direct communication through a series of monthly "Food News Notes for Libraries," which will enable you to know the food facts to be stressed, and will give you suggestions as to lists of books and pamphlets and other usable material. We ask your loyal support and we know that you will give it.[32]

Bulletin boards in libraries across the nation carried food messages from Canada to the Gulf, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Collections of books on food subjects and pamphlets and recipes were invaluable sources of information. Carefully prepared exhibits awakened in thoughtless persons an intelligent interest in the part food must play in winning the war.

The Food Administration also asked librarians to clip items from local newspapers to show how they were cooperating with the food program. Librarians were asked to send these items to their respective state publicity directors.

The food conservation bulletins and other printed matter were sent to the Library Directors in lots large enough to ensure complete distribution to the libraries in

their states. As a result, more than 1,500,000 pamphlets and leaflets, 600,000 posters, and a quantity of photographs were distributed.[33]

Religious Organizations

In a letter sent out in June to more than 200,000 churches and synagogues, Hoover called upon the clergy to cooperate with him and the Department of Agriculture in urging the people of the country to increase the production of food and to cut down as much as possible on the amount of waste. Hoover designated Sunday, July 1, 1917, as Food Saving Day, and requested that all pastors preach on the conservation of food.[34]

The clergy of all denominations assisted the food campaign with special appeals from their pulpits on "Conservation Sundays." In response to a demand from the profession, a special three-day orientation course of instruction was given in Washington during the same month for a large number of ministers, at which time Hoover and members of his staff presented the food problem to them. A follow-up meeting was held in August with editors and representatives of the religious press of the country. At this meeting, a representative of the religious press was chosen to serve on the staff of the Education Division. Special articles were furnished to religious journals, Sunday School papers, and other publications, written by

men and women trained to write for these publications who were kept closely advised of the conservation program. This material was then sent out to the press through a weekly publication called the Religious Press Weekly Bulletin.

In confirming the religious campaign, Allen issued the following guidance to the state education directors:

> Note: Here is a summary of Mr. Hoover's message which will be read in all churches. . . . It is suggested that you work in items of interest concerning local observance of the conservation service. Also please note that this message is the same one that is being sent to the fraternal organizations throughout the country. We are sending Mr. Hoover's message in full and suggest that it be available in quantities in the office of the Federal Food Administrator for distribution to the newspapers.

A system of weekly report cards was instituted whereby the Food Report Committee in Washington was informed each week of the extent of compliance in each congregation with the food conservation program by its members' households.[35]

Advertising

The American genius for advertising was called upon to assist in the conservation of food. While Hoover realized that advertising was a commodity that could be valued and paid for the same as military equipment, ships, and other commodities in connection with the military program, he took the view that the donation of advertising could be asked for on the same grounds as the donation of

personal services. With the assistance of Allen's Advertising Section, Hoover appealed for volunteer services and material on patriotic grounds. The relative importance which each advertising medium would play in stirring the public mind to conservation duties and needs was planned comprehensively and on a large scale.[36]

Outdoor advertising interests were the first to contribute; but other advertising media--periodicals, newspapers, printed matter in house organs and similar private publications, controllers of streetcar advertising space and numerous other media--followed suit. The major forms of advertising used were (1) outdoor, (2) poster, (3) street and railway coach signs, and (4) conservation advertising by food companies.[37]

One of the first outdoor electric advertising campaigns started in September, 1917. All signs were uniform in design and illuminated by electric lights at night. Allen sent out the following press release on September 17, explaining its purpose:

> Through the cooperation of advertising companies, the Treasury Department, municipal authorities and electric light companies the U. S. Food Administration is, without cost, putting on a national outdoor advertising campaign that is probably the biggest thing of the sort ever undertaken. The slogan, "Food Will Win the War--Don't Waste It," is being blazoned in every large city in the country on immense signs on public buildings.

The value of this type of free advertising alone was estimated at $700,000 for the first year.[38]

Streetcar advertising was donated by the advertising companies controlling this space, and the Railroad Administration gave permission for the posting of signs in railway cars.

Milling companies and other dealers were encouraged to advertise conservation rather than the foods which the Food Administration was trying to save. Syrup manufacturers, sugar companies, and others carried these advertisements in their usual advertising space, and advocated the economical use of their products. Some of the milling companies not only carried this advertising in the press but went further and painted signs in considerable numbers.

The CPI assisted the Food Administration in this effort by mass-producing fifty posters of varying descriptions, as well as fifteen car, bus, and window cards, and the printing of fifty cartoons, which illustrated food conservation measures.[39]

Since much of the advertising effort was decentralized to the states, an accurate assessment of the total value of this patriotic giving is not possible. However, the Food Administration conservatively estimated the total value at $19,417,600.[40]

Displays and Exhibits

Window displays were used extensively in the retail

stores all over the country to remind the American people of the aims of food conservation. The helpful cooperation necessary for the success of this campaign was solicited through the various mercantile associations of the country.

The following press bulletin was disseminated to state offices on September 7, 1917, for release the next day:

> Plans are now being perfected for a widespread campaign in visualized publicity to convince the people of the United States of the necessity for food conservation, and to show them the best methods of food substitution.
>
> Window displays in the retail stores all over the United States are to be used to tell in the most forceful way possible the aims of the United States Food Administration. The helpful cooperation necessary for the success of this plan is being secured through the various mercantile associations of the country, and the response already received is such as to guarantee the most complete success ever reached by any such plan of publicity and education.
>
> In part, this great educational campaign will be conducted in the form of a contest, with prizes for the best window displays, under the supervision of the United States Publishers Corporation, as representative of the trade papers of the nation.[41]

Exhibits were also used in the almost never ending campaign to highlight food conservation in the eyes of the public. One such notice appeared in the morning papers across the nation on November 5, 1917:

> Interesting food conservation exhibits are being prepared under the supervision of the United States Food Administration for display in Washington, D. C., and New York.

> The first of these will be a part of the Washington Food Show to be held in Convention Hall in that city November 5-17, and the second will be shown at the Hotel Exposition in the Grand Central Palace, New York City, from November 12-17.
>
> The exhibits will consist of six divisions, including food which the Food Administration is urging shall be saved, and special features will drive home the facts to be presented to the public.[42]

Allen conducted a survey in the fall of 1917 on the number and different types of exhibitions held in the United States each year. He discovered that 2,200 interstate, state, district, and county fairs were held annually. A large number of industrial and commercial expositions were also planned for late summer and early autumn each year. Allen passed these findings to his state representatives with this guidance: "Many of them are already planning exhibits, demonstrations and contests on food conservation. Many others will doubtless find it possible to perform a service through the promotion of food economy if requested and be properly organized."[43]

Public Speakers

The Education Division did not foster an extensive public speaking campaign. However, one of the most effective organizations within the CPI was that of the "Four Minute Men." This national organization consisted of 75,000 speakers throughout the country. Outstanding speakers were chosen to present four-minute talks on a variety of topics of national interest to local communities.

Food Conservation was one of the subjects presented. Out of forty-two prepared speeches, five were concerned solely with the Food Administration and its food-saving campaign.[44]

The use of speakers by cooperating organizations such as churches, schools, lodges, and clubs was encouraged. In October, 1917, six representatives of the Food Administration were sent to France to examine conditions and make a special report to the American people on their findings. These representatives returned in January, 1918, and with twelve other speakers made a tour of nineteen of the central states.[45]

Hugh Gibson volunteered to be one of the speakers to make the tour. In announcing the itinerary for the group, he asked Allen to include this information: "We are going in a private car, and will live in it, and propose making a number of small stops, speaking from the back platform."[46]

This speaking tour reached large audiences in practically all of the principal towns of the states visited.

Other Programs and Methods

There were a good many ways of winning the fight for food. To increase food production, some communities plowed up tennis courts, lawns, parks, campuses, and golf

links to plant vegetable gardens. Thousands of college boys, clubmen, and athletes were brought into the ranks as active volunteers in the food conservation program.

Dartmouth, Harvard, and other colleges followed their example. Rich men lined up to help. William K. Vanderbilt plowed under the lawns of his Long Island estate and planted potatoes. It was estimated that 12,000,000 acres of fertile soil and 500,000 able-bodied men were obtained this way--men exempt from military service. These enlistees produced $300,000,000 worth of foodstuffs annually.[47]

Missouri adopted a positive program to save food. It established Farm Clubs in every one of Missouri's 114 counties. The state appointed an expert farm adviser for each county, who showed farmers how to increase their bank accounts by scientific farming. Investigations and surveys were made to determine the potential wealth of each county. The state authorized each county a seed-testing and distributing bureau, organized pig and calf clubs for boys, canning and cooking clubs for girls, and taught small town merchants the mysteries of scientific merchandising. The end result was that Missouri not only produced the biggest and richest crop in its history, but it was better organized and equipped for greater efforts in the years ahead.[48]

Railroads, hotels, and restaurants revised their

menus and kitchen methods to reduce waste. The Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad, for example, announced the adoption of a new menu for dining cars. The menu included a price for a "regular large portion" and another for "smaller war portions." The price charged for a war portion was one-third less. The accompanying slogan read, "Overeating is never worse on a railway journey where exercise is often impossible."[49]

The hotels and restaurants were the first to observe wheatless and meatless days. Meatless days were inaugurated in many of the hotels in New York City in October, 1917, and by December, practically all of the principal hotels and restaurants of the country were observing meatless and wheatless days.

At a meeting held in Washington with Hoover on March 29, 1918, five hundred owners and managers of hotels and restaurants pledged themselves to operate their establishments entirely on a wheatless basis until the fall harvest. This was followed by similar pledges from more than four thousand other hotels and restaurants. This leadership was of great value in promoting widespread observance of the appeal to conserve the use of wheat in the households of the country. "If we do this till next harvest, we can supply the minimum needs of the Allies," Hoover said.[50]

Although coordination in all public relations campaigns was handled mainly through the state and regional information channels, several meetings of the Public Information Directors in the United States were held in Washington, so that Hoover and Allen could discuss the strategy of the food campaign and other matters of policy.

Hoover believed that these meetings were necessary and productive. He also felt that these Directors, on whom fell the burden of informing and educating the general public through the newspapers and other media should meet and "keep fully in touch with the world food problems and discuss the questions peculiar to each of the diversified zones of production and consumption in the United States."[51] At the first meeting held in late October, 1917, Hoover said:

> We are a discouragingly critical people. Those of us in Washington are damned if we do, and damned if we don't. There is but one real test for Washington. Our game is to win the war and the test is, do we keep our eye on the ball? For, friends, this people will be cursed for the next ten generations if we don't. Nor does this test apply to Washington alone. We in the Government can criticize also, and our right of criticism lies against that minority of people who hope for self-interest--financial, social, or political--out of winning the war.[52]

At first, many of the committees arrived in Washington full of indignation and wrath over all the restrictions being imposed by the Food Administration. Will Irwin described their meetings with Hoover in this way:

> . . . But they found a quietly spoken, pleasantly mannered man with no "side" about him; a man who seemed already to know and appreciate their problems and capabilities as well as they themselves; a man who, with no political palaver, went straight to the point. . . . He was always willing to cooperate: "Here is the problem; we will solve it together," he would say. While much of Washington still felt its way, he knew exactly where he was going. . . . Men and women alike returned from Washington in a state of quiet enthusiasm for their leader.[53]

In the spring of 1918, Hoover personally opened the campaign for increased acreage in wheat, and another to stimulate additional litters of pigs. And here Hoover appealed to the people. Through the volunteers who flocked to his standards, through mobilization of a willing press, he took the public into his confidence. He hammered into them the truth about our situation. The Allies needed wheat, that most concentrated, transportable, and universally liked of all foodstuffs. They needed fats, and to supply that, we could give them pork. The Government did not ask anyone to starve himself or to stint his family. But Americans could eat other cereals in place of wheat and other fats in place of pork. "We can eliminate much waste too; and we can deny ourselves unnecessary sugar. Here is the practical way for everyone to serve his country and his cause," Hoover said.[54]

Many humorous stories grew out of the Food Administration, and most of them were aimed at Hoover himself. But these stories were not sarcastic or embarrassing--if anything, they were jovial and reflected the good nature of

a hard working people striving for unity and accomplishment. For example, a parody was written to amplify the instructions on the Home Card. The humor of its sentiment is expressed by the title, "O. U. Hoover":

> My Tuesdays are meatless,
> My Wednesdays are wheatless,
> I am getting more eatless each day.
> My home it is heatless,
> My bed it is sheetless,
> They're all sent to the Y.M.C.A.
> The bar rooms are treatless,
> My coffee is sweetless,
> Each day I get poorer and wiser.
> My stockings are feetless,
> My trousers are seatless,
> My God, but I do hate the Kaiser.[55]

When Hoover appealed for increased pork production, one commentator amused his audience by saying that Hoover "knew the actual number of sows that were pregnant and the date each was to farrow."

Hoover was also amused, but his appeal to the suburbanite to assist in raising pork production was sincere as he said:

> In view of the European situation and our own shortage in hogs, we will have a high average price for pork products. Therefore, it must be to the vital advantage of every farmer to raise hogs.
>
> This situation is one that can be partly solved by our suburban population. If every suburbanite took to his care a pig and fed it on the house garbage, he would increase our fat supply and do so without calling upon our general feeding stuffs. . . . We need a "Keep-a-pig" movement in this country--and a properly cared for pig is no more unsanitary than a dog.[56]

Hoover set up a priority system to guarantee that our soldiers and sailors received the best food available.

Other surplus food stocks in the country were then earmarked for Allied consumption. Even so, there was considerable competition among the Allied and American military buying agencies, each with a consuming desire to be certain of future supplies.

In order to keep prices down, prevent hoarding and discourage black market activities, each food consuming and issuing agency had to obtain an approved license. This amounted to more than just a contract of good faith between the food outlet involved and the Government. Violators were punished and notices of infractions were published in the newspapers. Minor violators were required to make donations to the Red Cross.

A determination was also made on major restraints against those who would not cooperate in price and distribution controls. Each of the trade groups appointed its own War Committee of five to seven men to work with the Food Administration. This measure was in effect only during the war and was later dissolved without lasting changes in the trades.[57]

One of the principal objectives of the Food Administration was that of conserving ammonia. This critical shortage received wide publicity because of its importance, and the reasons were covered in an address by Dr. R. L. Wilbur of the Food Administration at a conference of the County Food Committee in Columbus, Ohio, on

December 3, 1917:

> . . . Ammonia is a very significant thing. From ammonia we get ammunition, fertilizer and cold storage, and nitrogen is the basis of ammonia. . . . If we use it for ammunition we cannot use it for fertilizer; if we use it for fertilizer we cannot use it for cold storage. . . . You probably never thought of it before, but it is one of the most essential things in our food problem, and in the production of it and in the care of it afterwards.[58]

Another area which deserved Hoover's attention from a public relations standpoint was farm production itself. In addition to reducing farmers' risks by giving guarantees sufficiently in advance to allow the farmer to market his products, Hoover also protected the farmer's interests in farm labor and in machinery supplies, and above all, he appealed to the farmer's patriotic efforts.[59]

The Food Administration also gained the cooperation of the leading millers of the country, and these millers organized a committee to represent their industry. Chaired by H. S. Garfield, one of the committee's first duties was to determine a fair price for the 1917 wheat harvest. After this determination, the Food Administration controlled exports on a fair basis without change or fluctuation. By this arrangement, the price of wheat was established as well as the resultant price of flour and bread.

As a result, the public was assured of an equitable and stabilized price for flour, and the volunteer arrangements with the mills insured maximum cost benefits to the public.

An exhaustive investigation was also made on the cost of baking and bread distribution, and active discussions were held with the Bakers' War Emergency Committee on the elimination of waste in the industry and the production of a standard loaf of bread. These negotiations received wide publicity in the press and resulted in the creation of the famous "war loaf."[60]

In all these things, and with the help of Allen's Education Division, Hoover had trusted the public to do its job. It responded with such vigor that the Food Administration often had to hold back its enthusiasm instead of spurring it on--the posters advising to eat this instead of that, the classes learning how to cook palatable dishes from unaccustomed materials, the wearing of Food Administration aprons, and the cards in the windows. Later, the boys and girls and young women streamed out to the fields to help with the harvest.[61]

In view of the many sacrifices asked of the American people, it was Hoover's policy that they also be informed of progress made in the quantity of foodstuffs shipped to the Allies. One example of this type of information was released to the press on March 5, 1918: "From July 1, 1914, to January 1, 1918, the United States exported to the European Allies sufficient food to furnish complete yearly rations for 57,100,933 people. In addition, there was a surplus of protein capable of supplying this

portion of the diet for 22,194,570 additional men."[62]

In March, 1918, while the food situation did not warrant any diminution in efforts to eliminate waste, the Food Administration desired to secure better adjustments in food balances in order to promote further savings to conserve wheat. On March 16, the public was advised that the meatless daily meal and the porkless Saturday would no longer be required, and as long as the situation continued, the only restriction to remain in effect would be the beefless and porkless Tuesday.

Suggestions for improving publicity coverage were given the state and regional offices on a continual basis. The cooperation of the newspapers was stressed as one of the first essentials. Allen also advised whether or not respective editors had already been furnished publicity material sent from the State Educational Director's office, and "that editors should be kept informed of each program so that the general material can be adapted to the local situation."[63]

In selecting and targeting the many different publics who had varying degrees of interest, Hoover did not forget the importance of the American Negro. He issued a special appeal to this group by saying:

> The Food Administration realizes that the Negro people of this Nation can be of the utmost help in food conservation and food production. Every Negro man, woman, and child can render a definite service by

> responding to the appeal and instructions of the Food Administration and its representatives. The Negroes have shown themselves loyal and responsive in every national crisis. Their greatest opportunity of the present, to exercise this loyalty, is to help save and grow food.
>
> I am confident that they will respond and thus prove again their patriotism for the winning of this war. White and black, rich and poor, are equal in this final struggle that the world may be free.[64]

In all of these methods, Hoover reinforced the concept that all facts, ideas, and opinions should be displayed in the common marketplace where citizens of a democracy can consider them and "buy" those that appeal. Although citizens may sometimes buy inferior or wrong ideas in this ideological supermarket, it is contended that society eventually will select wisely that which is good because man is a rational being. The argument is both simple and direct, but it is basic to the theory of democracy.[65]

All of these activities in public relations were concerned with giving the general public a better understanding of the policies and purposes of the Food Administration.

Feedback

The evidence supports the fact that Hoover was keenly interested in the reaction of the public to his food program. Even though scientific sampling techniques of opinion research had not yet been formulated, Hoover held

numerous conferences in Washington with all different types of groups as has been mentioned, set up advisory committees in specific food areas of interest, made personal appearances and speeches, used mail analysis, instituted a clipping service, and directed that reports on trips made to field agencies by trained representatives from his office be submitted.

The Food Administration itself could not measure mathematically the strength and spread of America's enthusiasm until it invented the device of the "food pledge" to stimulate and measure public sentiment. Most men, and especially Americans, like to register their enthusiasm formally by enlisting under a banner. The pledges came in like a blizzard. Finally, fourteen million families signed up to serve. This was one of the largest volunteer armies ever enrolled up to that time in the United States or in any other country.[66]

Letters from American doughboys in France were released for publication to provide feedback to the public on some of the conditions existing in Europe. One soldier wrote: "I watched our men getting their Christmas dinner. There was turkey and mincepie for every man. . . . God only knows how Uncle Sam contrived to do it in this out of the way corner of the world." Still another wrote home:

> At one place I was billeted with a woman over seventy years old; there was a lump of coal which

> reposed on a shelf in front of the stove. She burned twigs and looked at the coal to keep warm. One day she dug down behind some papers in a cupboard and pulled out an egg, which she showed me with all the pride in possessing a diamond necklace. She said she was saving it for some day when she was sick.[67]

Women's fashions also reflected food conservation and the name of its director. Women prominent in the food conservation movement in Montclair, New Jersey, appeared on the streets wearing "Hoover-alls," a one-piece dress. The belt crossed in the front with buttons at the back. Detachable cuffs were white and fastened with large pearl buttons. The flat collar was of white pique, and the skirt was gored and had large patch pockets and a very deep hem. The cap, which completed the costume, was a helmet of white pique.[68]

Once when Hoover was worrying about the effectiveness of his efforts to save meat for our army, our Allies, and the civilian population, he received a letter from a five-year-old boy, printed with a lead pencil, in which the boy had written: "Please tell Mr. Hoover that I don't leave nothing on my plate except gristle." The next day as Lewis Strauss entered his office, he overheard Hoover dictating a letter to the little boy. Hoover said, "My dear little friend: If every little boy did as you are doing, my job would be easy."[69]

Another letter from a personal friend, Warren Gregory from San Francisco, not only addressed food

conservation, but some of the other pressing matters of that day. Hoover read the following:

> There is an extraordinary apathy concerning the war. The contributions to the Red Cross and the subscriptions to the Liberty Loan have been satisfactory. Outside, however, of the college fellows who are to a considerable extent going into military activities, there is no great popular feeling one way or the other.
>
> In the food situation: The general feeling of the people whom I have met here is enthusiastically in favor of supporting any measure that you may see fit to carry through. I think that you can rely upon a very considerable loyal cooperation among all the women, as well as from the men who have been engaged in the food business.
>
> I hope you won't waste too much time on some of these pin-headed Congressmen. . . . One of the good things I hope will come out of this war is a general shaking down of our administrative and legislative methods of doing business, and this is bound to come, because people may be willing to have their money wasted, but they are unwilling to have their people shot through inefficient management. In fact, if you had the time I think you could write a most interesting book on the inefficiencies of modern government and the probability that this war will cause a very much closer relation to be established between the actual doer of things and the public appreciation of it.[70]

Over the months, the American scene was transformed out of a nation of wasters into a people who regarded the waste of food as a sin.

The record also shows that there were certain assertions made that Hoover was one of the most unpopular individuals in the country. But the popularity of a man so absorbed in himself and his work is sometimes difficult to gauge. The New Republic addressed the unpopularity of

Hoover in an editorial this way:

> Ask an average housewife whether she fears for the future food supply of her family. She will answer that she does not, and if you inquire further into her confidence in the future, you will most certainly find that it depends on her faith in the food administration. Ask the average farmer, who toils much and says little, whether he was not bitterly disappointed over the failure of two dollar and a half wheat. He will reply that he feels that he ought to have more for his labor, but he believes the food administration is trying to be fair; it is helping to win the war, and that is the main thing. . . . This may not be popularity, but it is something infinitely more worthwhile.[71]

Hostile Publicity

In order to permit an objective analysis into the reputation of Hoover, perhaps some of the opposing viewpoints expressed in the public arena should also be recognized. I will omit any further reference to the Congressional opposition that Hoover encountered, since the evidence already presented adequately supports this fact.

Hoover's own household came under attack in the form of pro-German accusations that the Food Controller did not observe food restrictions in his own household. Allen furnished guidance to combat these accusations to the State Directors of Education on February 8, 1918, so that facts could be provided beforehand.

The Los Angeles Express reported: "The Hoover home in Washington is a wheatless, candyless, sugarless, cakeless, pieless establishment. The Hoover household practices to the letter all conservation principles which

Mr. Hoover has outlined for the nation."[72]

Other rumors and enemy propaganda also had their play in the public relations areaa.

One of the difficulties in overseas shipments involved the alleged misdirection of food intended for feeding Belgians, which Hoover still directed. On September 22, 1917, Eugene C. Harter, American Consular Agent in Sweden, in a letter to Wallace J. Young, American Consul in Gothenbert, wrote of a German captain back from the front who said, "I order a carload of provisions for my soldiers every month--all American butter. Of course, the food is only intended for the Belgians but if you get hold of some of the larger dealers you can get some of it." Other allegations stated that "some German families had gotten rice, oatmeal, and other foods in small quantity, and that once in Cologne, one of the large stores there had a fair stock of American crackers supposed to have come from the Belgian relief supplies."[73]

Another German soldier said that one German officer he knew was regularly supplying his family from Belgium. He further stated that it was quite a thing for German soldiers, when going home on furlough, to take with them supplies of condensed milk.

The Food Administration was satisfied in the absolute falsity of these rumors but realized the harm caused by the spreading of such stories to the public.

Consequently, Hoover requested, through the State Department, that American Minister Ira N. Morres refute these disturbing rumors.[74]

The same persistent and methodical German propaganda that the American Government intended to confiscate foods from households was circulated throughout this country and Canada, notwithstanding the many denials made of it. It got so bad that the Food Administration released the following explanation early in December, 1917:

> Rumors absolutely without foundation have been circulated; stories without a vestige of truth have been given a circumstantial setting in order the better to discredit what is being done in the interests of the soldiers at the front and the women and children of the Allied nations. . . . Untruths have been fostered which have done more harm than battalions of German soldiers, because they have prevented this country bringing all its resources to bear against the enemy. Many citizens of unquestioned loyalty have served the purposes of such propaganda unwittingly by repeating grossly untrue rumors.[75]

The Washington Press Corps

As mentioned earlier, Hoover openly expressed his high regard for the press and the assistance that it rendered in helping to educate the massive public. The press was equally cognizant of Hoover's efforts, and appreciated the number of press conferences that Hoover held to discuss pertinent issues of the food program with them. During the final press conference before his scheduled trip to Europe, members of the press in attendance presented the following letter of appreciation to Hoover on

July 8, 1918:

> The newspaper men of Washington who have watched your efforts since you came to Washington today salute you as an official who has made good.
>
> It is little more than a year since you became Food Administrator of America--virtually Food Dictator of the World. You have played the part well. You have stood the test. The American public are with you to a man. The name of Hoover has become a household word. There is not a woman who has not subscribed in deeds daily accomplished to the work you have set before her.
>
> When you came to Washington we knew you as Herbert C. Hoover, the mining engineer. Then we dropped the middle initial and for a while we called you Herbert Hoover.
>
> Today you are known the world over as Hoover the man who is responsible for the food of our fighting men at the front and our men and women working at home.
>
> As Hoover the man we wish you good luck and God-speed. As Hoover the official who has made good we salute you.[76]

Hoover remained constantly in the public eye. The publicity about him, however, involved more the reporting of events rather than expressions of editorial opinions. During these years he became a symbol of leadership with the American public through the press.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1]Hoover Papers, U. S. Food Administration Files, Box 1-D/270.

[2]Ibid., Box 1-D/274.

[3]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 199-200.

[4]Mullendore, History, 82.

[5]Ibid., 83.

[6]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/274.

[7]New York Times, May 28, 1917, p. 5.

[8]Ibid., May 20, 1917, p. 2.

[9]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/276.

[10]Ibid., Box 1-D/270.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., Box 1-D/274.

[13]Ibid., Box 1-D/1.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Mark Sullivan, Our Times (New York, 6 vols., 1933), 1:40.

[16]Hoover, Memoirs, 1:250.

[17]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/1.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Clark, Washington Dateline, 16.

[20]Donald Wilhelm, "The Government's Own Publicity Work," The American Review of Reviews, LVI (1917), 507.

[21]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/272.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Mullendore, History, 84.

[24]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/271.

[25]Ibid., Box 1-D/273.

[26]Mullendore, History, 90.

[27]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/270.

[28]Mullendore, History, 92.

[29]P. P. Claxton, "The United States School Garden Army," Review of Reviews, 57:393-94 (1918).

[30]Dr. C. R. Van Hise Papers, University of Wisconsin Memorial Library Archives, Box 75.

[31]Mullendore, History, 77.

[32]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/274.

[33]Ibid., Box 1-D/272.

[34]New York Times, June 18, 1917, p. 2.

[35]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/273.

[36]Mullendore, History, 88.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/274.

[39]George Creel, How We Advertised America (New York, 1920), 94.

[40]Mullendore, History, 90.

[41]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/273.

[42]Ibid., Box 1-D/270.

[43]Ibid., Box 1-D/271.

[44]Creel, How We Advertised America, 90-93.

[45]Mullendore, History, 91.

[46]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/272.

[47]John Bruce Mitchell, "Fighting It Out In the Food Trenches," Forum (October, 1917), 323-33.

[48]Ibid.

[49]New York Times, June 18, 1917, p. 2.

[50]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/270.

[51]Ibid., Box 1-D/274.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 201-02.

[54]Ibid., 199.

[55]Hoover Papers, Box 1-Q/154.

[56]Ibid., Box 1-D/270.

[57]Hoover, Memoirs, 1:250.

[58]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/270.

[59]Hoover, Memoirs, 1:242-43.

[60]Hoover Papers, 1-D/272.

[61]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 200.

[62]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/274.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid., Box 1-D/271.

[65]James W. Schwartz, The Publicity Process (Ames, Iowa, 1967), 5.

[66]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 200.

[67]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/274.

[68]New York Times, July 30, 1917, p. 10.

[69]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/5.

[70]Ibid., Box 1-D/1.

[71]The New Republic, May 11, 1918, p. 33.

[72]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/272.

[73]Ibid.,

[74]Ibid., Box 1-O/154.

[75]Ibid., Box 1-D/272.

[76]Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

CONTINUATION OF THE UNITED STATES FOOD ADMINISTRATION 1918-1919

Evaluation of Public Relations Program

One of the important steps in the public relations process is that of evaluation. Cutlip and Center refer to evaluation as the final step in the process wherein the public relations practitioner seeks, through research, answers to the questions: "How did we do? Would we have been better off if we had tried something else?" Methodical research removes the guesswork from much of public relations practice. Evaluation is the common-sense of profiting from experience.[1]

In addition to Hoover's attitude toward the press and the part it played in his relations with the public, this study was also concerned with Hoover's own evaluation of the results achieved by the food program and the methods used to gain public acceptance. The evidence indicates that the American public was positively swayed in support of food conservation measures. In a speech entitled "Food Control Is a War Measure," made to the Pittsburgh Press Club on April 18, 1918, Hoover clarified these questions by stating:

> To accomplish this . . . education requires an intimate understanding for each man, woman, and child in the United States of the objectives of the Government and the duty that falls upon them. We have called upon the women and men in the United States with an unfailing reply. We have created great numbers of committees who have worked with the utmost devotion. We have penetrated each of our 20,000,000 households periodically with literature and we have plastered the . . . country with posters and urgings. We have secured the fine cooperation of the manufacturers and distributors of food.
>
> But we could not have attained this had we not had the absolute devotion and teamwork of every newspaper in the United States. Ourevery appeal has, through this gigantic influence, received an immediate and prompt distribution. Without this incessant, voluntary, liberal support our plan would have been impossible.[2]

In other expressions of appreciation, Hoover informed the public of progress being made by the Food Administration in feeding the people whose armies were arrayed against the common enemy. Evidence that progress was made is shown in this information disseminated through the mass media after the first year of operation.

The pork exports for March, 1918, were over fifty per cent larger than any previous month seven years prior, and almost three times as great as the highest amount exported in any month in the four years before 1915. Exports of beef products were more than twenty per cent larger than any month during the seven years prior, and more than twice as great as the highest amount exported in any month in the four years before 1915.

From July 1, 1917, to March 31, 1918, the United

States exported to the Allies 80,000,000 bushels of wheat and wheat flour, or 124 per cent of the amount available for export on July 1. This was possible mainly through conservation at home. In 1916, only fifty-one per cent of this amount was available for shipment. Exports of rye and rye flour were thirty-two per cent larger than the previous year; barley was fifty-five per cent larger; and oats and oatmeal were thirty-four per cent greater.*

---

*These figures are those of the Food Administration and the claim for success as seen by Hoover and his associates. Some doubt exists as to whether this success was totally due to a decrease in food consumption or an increase in food production at home.

Based on food consumption figures compiled by the U. S. Department of Commerce and published in Historical Statistics of the United States (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960), the average American consumed 75.8 pounds of beef in 1918 as opposed to 71.9 pounds in 1917; this was lowered to 69.3 pounds in 1919. Likewise, pork consumption increased from 58.9 pounds per person in 1917 to 61 pounds in 1918, and 63.9 pounds in 1919.

As a corollary explanation, the number of beef animals slaughtered increased from 15,741,000 carcasses in 1917 to 17,093,000 in 1918. Hog production increased from 56,500,000 in 1917 to more than 65,000,000 in 1918 and was repeated in 1919.

Although farm labor remained relatively steady at slightly over thirteen million farmers from 1916-1919, farm machinery increased from 37,000 tractors in 1916 to 158,000 in 1919. Total acreage available for harvest crops also increased from 340,000,000 to 364,000,000 acres during the same period.

This statistical report confirms that Americans used less wheat and sugar during the period of the Food Administration, even though the 1918 crop of wheat was

In comparing prices, the wholesale price of a barrel of flour in Minneapolis on May 15, 1917, the day the Food Administration began, was $16.75. A year later it was $9.80, a decrease of $6.95 a barrel, or forty-one per cent. Likewise, the wholesale price of refined sugar was decreased by twelve per cent during the first year.[3]

Hoover told the public that these results were possible only through the wholehearted support of the nation to the general food program, "and because of the efforts the American people have made, they should be interested in what has been accomplished."[4] This information was also relayed to extension workers in agricultural colleges for use in preparing lectures and addresses in acquainting farmers with the international scope of food problems.

Hoover reported to President Wilson: "In general the farmer going to market has received twenty-seven per cent more than last summer; the housewife buying in market

---

greater than the 1917 crop. The average consumption of wheat flour dropped from 191 pounds per person in 1917 to 179 pounds in 1918; whereas, the consumption of substitute corn flour increased from 46.5 to 49.7 pounds in 1918. The average sugar consumption also decreased from 13.8 pounds in 1917 to 13.3 pounds in 1918.

has paid thirteen per cent less. And the Allies have been sustained."[5]

The success of the food pledge campaign was attributed in large measure to the personal door to door canvassing made by the 500,000 volunteers who participated within the states.

Other forms of evidence confirmed the success of the public relations appeals made for food conservation. Senator Oscar W. Underwood of Alabama exemplified this mirrored public opinion in a press statement issued on July 9:

"The Food Administration is to be especially congratulated upon the manner in which it enlisted the whole population in its service. To tell 100,000,000 people, far from the actual seat of war, to change entirely their habits of eating is a step that seemed almost revolutionary in our country. Yet the response was instantaneous and wholehearted."[6]

Hoover's letter to President Wilson two days later relayed this opinion back to the White House:

> . . . I am sure that all the millions of our people, agricultural as well as urban, who have contributed to these results should feel a very definite satisfaction. . . . It is difficult to distinguish between various sections of our people--the homes, public eating places, food trades, urban or agricultural population--in assessing credit for these results, but no one will deny the dominant part of the American women.[7]

Allen sent all of these transactions to state information representatives to assist in writing their own news releases to local newspapers. He offered this type of advice on statistical reports: "No national publicity has been attempted on this report. Your release will be the first announcement. You will doubtless be interested in specific figures covering the cities of your state."[8]

The New Republic summed up the effectiveness of the publicity campaign in an article entitled "Wasting Less Food," dated February 23, 1918:

> The newspapers, and the bakers and dealers via the newspapers, have recognized that the food conservation program would fail unless it had the best publicity. They have been helped to that conclusion by the number and the skill of the many writers and advertising men who volunteered their services to the Administration. And these men have not been bound to a rigid program. . . . State agents . . . have been free to work with individual ideas. Successful propaganda is interchanged between states. Warnings are issued of schemes that have failed. It is an easy system that encourages local initiative. . . .
>
> Publicity, the Food Administration's only weapon, has no doubt done a good deal to promote conservation.[9]

Other issues of public importance concerning food conservation dealt with prohibition, the shift to peace program after the armistice, and the problem of surplus commodities. These issues had relevance in the public relations arena.

Prohibition

One of the major public relations problems

concerned with food conservation grew out of prohibition. Using food conservation as a platform, the prohibition forces continued in their attempts to completely dry up the country. They were successful in stopping the distillation of hard liquors for the duration of the war, although an ample supply was available for several more years. Other legislation reduced the alcoholic content of beer to two and three-fourths per cent. Not satisfied with these results, the prohibition forces continued their pressure through strong lobby forces in Washington to completely suppress brewing and the making of wines. Their main contention centered around the additional savings in grain that would result by stopping all brewing.

In principle, Hoover favored the saving of grain, but he was more concerned with what suppression of brewing would mean from a social utility point of view.

The actual amount of grain used each month was estimated at 4,500,000 bushels, of which thirty per cent was recovered and used as cattle feed--this reduced the overall expenditure of grain to 3,150,000 bushels a month.

Hoover believed that complete cessation of brewing would cause beer to disappear from the liquor trade within one or two months and the whole country would be put practically on a whiskey, brandy, and gin basis, with some supplies of wine. The saloons would be left open to serve drinks carrying forty or fifty per cent alcohol, instead of

a large proportion of their customers being served with two and three-fourths per cent beer. Realizing the public importance of this issue and its adverse effect on food conservation, Hoover made the following announcement to the press on June 5, 1918:

> As to the discussion over the suppression of brewing, I wish to say emphatically that from a strictly food conservation point of view I should like to see the use of foodstuffs suppressed in all drinks hard and soft. This is not, however, the whole story. We stopped distilling a year ago. There is a long supply of whiskey, gin, and other 20% to 40% distilled drinks in the country. We have reduced the consumption of foodstuffs in brewing by 30% and reduced the alcohol content of beer to 2-3/4%. If we stop brewing the saloons of the country will still be open but confined practically to a whiskey and gin basis. Any true advocate of temperance and of national efficiency in these times will shrink from this situation, for the national danger in it is greater than the use of some 4,000,000 bushels of grain monthly in the breweries. If the American people want prohibition it should prohibit by legislation to that end and not force the Food Administration to the responsibility for an orgy of drunkenness. It is mighty difficult to get drunk on 2-3/4% beer; it will be easy enough if we force a substitution of distilled drinks for it.
>
> The Food Administration has gone as far as it can toward temperance without precipitating a worse situation. If the American people or Congress will stop the sale of distilled liquors, the Administration will find no difficulty in stopping brewing.[10]

Hoover's stand against prohibition illustrates the importance of presenting both sides of an issue in the free market place to ensure an informed citizenry. Hoover was not against the saving of grain, but he was opposed to the serious moral consequences that might otherwise result. For this reason, he favored continuation of the limited

amounts of foodstuffs used in brewing, as indeed was done.

Continuing Programs

Hoover continually stressed to the public the importance of food conservation and what it meant to Americans fighting overseas. Likewise, he wanted our soldiers and sailors to know about the efforts being made to support them at home. During his trip to Europe, Hoover told of these efforts in a news release to the Stars and Stripes on August 16, 1918:

AMERICA'S FOOD CHIEF TO THE A.E.F.

> It is impossible to express the great wave of pride that has crossed the United States upon the proof that our boys at their first and every brush have measured up to the highly experienced Hun.
>
> It's a full sized and red blooded man's job. It represents the ultimate sacrifice that the nation can call for.
>
> All our sacrifices and exertions at home look small before the vision of what the nation has demanded of our boys here.
>
> Such as these sacrifices at home are--money, work or food--we are resolved to make in overflowing measure to every demand that General Pershing and this the greatest Army of history makes upon us, for we have but one purpose.
>
> This, the greatest military effort in our history, must lack nothing in the delivery of the final blow that will release our country from having to enter upon these terrible enterprises for another hundred years.
>
> Herbert Hoover[11]

Following his return home on August 24, Hoover told the American people of the thanks of the war-ravaged Allies.

He had emphasized to the people of Europe that Americans expected no thanks--that Americans were participating in food conservation as part of a mutual concern against a common enemy. Hoover also assured his European colleagues that the United States would provide the enlarged requirements needed for the following year.

America's food pledge which followed this announcement involved 20,000,000 tons of food relief, two-thirds more than the previous year.[12]

Once again, Hoover requested through the press the widespread cooperation of the public to meet America's commitment. He stated in part:

> The public sentiment of each community and of each group within each community, will be the determining factor for success. It is that public sentiment--that war conscience--which we wish to create; the feeling of responsibility of each individual to do his or her share in insuring the desired results. This intelligence and this conscience of our people is the main dependence of the Food Administration.[13]

To enhance a better balanced diet and to market the bumper crop of potatoes, Allen started a "Potato Campaign" in September, 1918. He suggested that state directors work through the following agencies to stimulate a greater use of potatoes: newspapers, retail grocers, women's organizations, schools, public eating places, libraries, motion-picture houses and theaters, churches, chambers of commerce, and Four-Minute Men. Allen also recommended that a corps of volunteers be organized within each community to

work on exhibits, cooking demonstrations, publicity, posters, with schools and churches, groceries and department stores, and other public agencies. He concluded by issuing this specific guidance on publicity:

> All around cooperation is necessary to make this campaign a success. The cooperation of the newspapers is one of the first essentials.
>
> The editor of your home paper has publicity material sent him from the office of the Educational Director of Food Administration for your state. He will give it space very willingly if he knows that you are prepared to carry out the local campaign. That makes the publicity material live local news.
>
> You should keep the editor informed of your program and give him every opportunity to adapt the general material to the local situation.[14]

Shortly before the armistice was signed, an intensive campaign was launched throughout the United States known as "Conservation Week for World Relief." Its purpose was to use every communication medium to bring before the people the change necessary to transcend from a war basis to a world relief basis, and the need for meeting the additional commitments made by Hoover when he was in Europe.

To begin the campaign, the Food Administration once again requested and gained the assistance of the many church organizations in the country. The first announcement was made through the press on October 21, 1918:

> Food Administrator Hoover has called upon the American people to set aside October 27th as Conservation Sunday. During that week there will be distributed to each home in the United States a new home card, indicating the 1918-1919 program for food conservation. In order that the important features of this vital program be presented, Mr. Hoover has prepared a message to be read in all churches on October 27th, and in addition has requested that all denominations observe this day with a conservation service.
>
> Mr. Hoover's message for Conservation Sunday will be distributed to the clergy through the organization of the Federal Food Administration in each State.

Follow-up bulletins were sent to all state and regional offices outlining specific details to fully implement the campaign.[15]

Hoover's personal papers make no mention of the overall success of Conservation Week, but a number of letters are on file expressing his appreciation to those who contributed.

While the world food situation did not warrant any less effort to eliminate waste, Hoover wanted to achieve further savings in wheat. As a result, the meatless daily meal and porkless Saturdays were discontinued, but beefless and porkless Tuesdays remained in effect.

Following its larger policy of leadership as opposed to coercion, of shifting the major burden from an overworked Government to volunteers, the Food Administration issued not regulations but requests and recommendations. It did not ration the people; it just asked their cooperation.

"Ninety-nine per cent of American business," said Hoover in reporting to the President, "gave hearty cooperation." For the remaining one per cent, Hoover's department had a device better than criminal law. The Food Act provided that the Food Administration might license all food dealers with a capital of more than $100,000. As a last resort, it could revoke licenses. The Food Administration used this authority occasionally, notably against certain manufacturers who were exceeding a fair profit and a ring of dealers who were diluting their shipments with inferior grain. In the case of smaller offenders, the standard penalty was a fine, the proceeds of which went to the Red Cross. Lists of offenders continued to be published in the newspapers for all to see.[16]

Characterizing the response of the people to appeals for increased production and conservation of foodstuffs as "the greatest spontaneous volunteer effort ever made in history," Hoover told the public that they had met the test of war in a manner that had amazed Germany, and had laid the foundation for a successful termination of the conflict. He said:

> You have accomplished more in a practical way than Germany has ever accomplished. No autocratic Government could have obtained the same results.
>
> Millions of new gardens have been planted, providing the largest supply of vegetables in the history of the country, and the prospect for an increase in production of cereals of 850,000,000 bushels.

> Even though the situation in Europe may be gloomy today, no American who has knowledge of the results already obtained in every direction need have one atom of fear that democracy will not defend itself in the United States.[17]

While Hoover's associates marveled at his energy, Mrs. Hoover was far from being idle and contributed much toward the Hoover reputation in the public relations arena. She organized a Food Administration Girls' Club in order to house many of the women employees. The cafeteria in the new Food Administration Building was so well patronized that it could scarcely accommodate all of its customers. Many workers in Washington were to remember her kindnesses during the alarming flu epidemic of 1918, when she provided medical service and care for the Food Administration employees who were sick.[18]

Shift to Peace

The armistice signed on November 11, 1918, ended four years of bitter fighting. Hoover addressed the Conference of Federal Food Administrators in Washington the next day, and emphasized that Americans should recognize that they had just passed a great milestone. "America must now get upon the path of peace and begin to relax the control measures at every point that does not open a possibility of profiteering and speculation," he said.

He also advocated that some organization had to continue to guide the distribution of food abroad, if it

were to reach the most deserving and needy. "Someone must coordinate the internal transportation of these large exports. Someone must organize our own needed imports of sugar, coffee, and vegetable oils. Someone must stimulate and guide our people in their desire to help in this war against famine," he emphasized.[19]

His message to all representatives of the Food Administration who did not attend this meeting read in part:

> Your work during the last year has had more to do than you may realize in the achievement of the American people which will be one of the remembered glories of the titanic struggle. . . .
>
> The essential feature of this plan was that individual conscience should rule under guidance of local leadership. It was then your work which made the devotion of twenty million households fruitful.
>
> As we come to the end of the undertaking, we are summoned to a still larger task--to provision the Allies and the liberated nations of Europe which face not hunger alone, but the collapse of all that holds their civilization together unless a steady stream of food supplies can be kept flowing to them. . . .
>
> I hope that each of you will respond . . . , that the same splendid support which was given to the prosecution of the war may be devoted to establishing the peace and security of the world.[20]

The campaign to save food was continued without specific slogans. Hoover realized that the task would be more difficult because patriotic slogans could no longer be used with the winning of the war. No longer could he ask the public to save for their boys in the army or navy, no longer "to win the war." But he remained firm in his

conviction by saying, "We must make the American people unable to waste food without qualms of conscience. We must find new inspiration somewhere for them--and we can." He was also concerned that the hungry peoples of the world might turn to anarchy and Bolshevism unless relief came to them quickly--before their ports and canals froze and anarchy had done its work--or it would come too late.[21]

There were a number of things that held over when the armistice came, and among them was the question of the price of hogs throughout the territory where hogs were produced. Hoover had assured the hog raisers that he would do everything in his power to keep the price of hogs per hundred pounds at thirteen times the value of a bushel of corn. He told this special public, however, that this was not a guarantee nor did he have the money to support it, but that he would exercise his best efforts to this end. He had been able to do so with the assistance of the War Trade Board, but two months after the armistice, the board withdrew its support.

Hoover was indignant at the effort of the War Trade Board to impair the power of the Food Administration to carry out its promise to the hog raisers, and directed that every honorable means be taken to prevent interference. Allen later said, "The result was, that owing to the effort of the Chief through his agencies, the seasonal arrangement as to the price of hogs was maintained. All of us rejoiced

that the Chief had honorably and effectively, in the face of strong influences, maintained the representation made to the hog raisers of the West."[22] Once again, Hoover earned the respect and confidence from those he had appealed to for support.

Relief and Reconstruction

After the German note arrived proposing an armistice based on Wilson's fourteen points, the President asked the War Council for an advisory opinion on American terms. Hoover held out for one vital point--a clause in the agreement committing the victors to the principle of supplying the vanquished with food. The Orient and South America had ample food supplies in storage, and unless markets could be established in Central Europe, the price of all farm products would drop in the United States. Hoover did not believe that American farmers should suffer as a result of their great service during the war.

In November, 1918, President Wilson sent Hoover to Paris to deal with food questions arising out of the armistice.

In opposition to President Wilson's request for a $100,000,000 relief appropriation to assist in European recovery, Senators Penrose, Reed, Gore, and Borah joined together and subjected Hoover's name to a general "mud bath" as a friend of the Chicago meat packers.

When asked by the press for a statement in reply to the criticism of certain Senators, Hoover issued this press release on January 23, 1919:

> I apparently emerge in a new light, as a friend of the Chicago packer. The same mail brings a report from Swift & Company blaming the Food Administration for reducing their profits by ten million dollars during the last year. I don't imagine the packers would appreciate a wide circle of such friends. I noticed also I committed a crime for holding joint conferences of farmers, representatives of the forty small packers, as well as the big packers together with representatives of the Allied Governments, for the purpose of settling on a price for exports that would give the American farmer a square deal, and a distribution of orders that would protect the small packer.
>
> If the American farmer and the small packer feel that these arrangements are wrong it would be the greatest burden off my shoulders if I could know it quickly for the British Government particularly is anxious to be relieved of these arrangements.[23]

Hoover summed up his feelings to President Wilson in a separate cable by stating:

> All this makes it very difficult for me to secure settlement of the pressing relations with Allied Governments on our outstanding food matters. I have just yesterday proposed a contract to the British Government for the equitable winding up of their moral obligations in the matter of relations with our farmers in pork products, and already I hear that their representatives feel that this opposition in the Senate gives them some justification for delay in settling this matter. This has nothing to do with the above matter, except as it shows how difficult a path these people can provide for us.[24]

The evidence does not support whether this message had any direct bearing on subsequent actions taken by Congress, but the Relief bill was passed by an overwhelming majority two days later.

Will Irwin later recalled his glimpses of Hoover at work during this critical period. "He reminded me of a chess master, playing twenty games at once and most of them blindfolded," he said. Germany was starved out and still starving; what had been Austria-Hungary was generally in even worse plight; Poland and those other provinces of old Russia which Germany had overrun were worse off than the Germans themselves; and all Southeastern Europe was hungry and disorganized. The dead of winter insured no help from native planting until the next summer.[25]

Hoover had the grave responsibility of averting an American economic catastrophe. Pork was the crux of the problem, and European markets had to be found in order to prevent a surplus of pork in the United States.

Hoover himself publicized the fact that the four main purposes of the Food Administration as to hogs were to see that the producer at all times could count on a fair price for his hogs, to see that the farmer increased the number of hogs bred, to limit the profit of the packer and the middleman, and to eliminate speculation.[26]

Early in December, 1918, the Allies had ordered 360,000,000 pounds of pork products for delivery in January; however, they canceled this order at the end of December. Hoover realized that unless he could manage to sell American pork for the same price and open up the

German blockaded market, the American packers would be unable to buy hogs and the farmers would fail in droves.

Finding little response from the British, Hoover persuaded the French and Italians to take their expected quota of 200,000,000 pounds for January. He then arranged for the U. S. Grain Corporation to buy 100,000,000 pounds and the C. R. B. to take up the remaining 60,000,000 pounds.

To insure markets for February, Hoover placed more orders with the Grain Corporation and the C. R. B. American doughboys guarding the Rhine or waiting for transports complained that they were "getting a lot of hog" at mess. The average serviceman did not understand that he was eating pork to save his family in some small town in Ohio or farm in Kansas from the consequences of financial panic. As a result, the price of pork remained stable. Then in March, Hoover achieved his greatest triumph of the armistice period. He persuaded the Allied Governments to lift the blockade of Germany. This--most importantly--put an end to the starving masses in Germany and gave the United States a full and regular outlet for its pork surplus.

This matter received wide coverage in the print media throughout the country. Hoover's efforts did much to bolster the confidence of the American people in their Government.[27]

End of the Food Administration

Hoover was designated as Director General of European Relief early in 1919, but the public was informed that he would also continue to function in a dual role as Food Administrator.

After completing food negotiations with the Allies and insuring that the American farmers' interests had been protected, Hoover wrote President Wilson on March 25, 1919: "I believe that the completion of the harvest year, therefore, offers a proper opportunity for me to retire after five years of public service."

Wilson replied on March 28: "If ever a man has earned the right to retire from great responsibilities, you have earned it by the admirable way in which you have done this work, the very burdensome and difficult work, which has fallen to you in this great war, and yet I experience a pang in thinking of your retirement."[28]

This set up a hue and cry of protest by the public. For example, the Joint Organization of the Farmers Union and State Grange of the States of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho sent a telegram to President Wilson in Paris stating in part:

> . . . Hoover has a most intimate knowledge and insight into the thoughts and minds of the peoples of the war-torn and starving countries of the world through his most valuable work of the past four years and therefore his retention as Food Administrator would do much to combat Bolshevikism and Anarchy and bring

> the people to a sober and sane state of mind and advance the cause of Democracy and Good Government throughout the world. He would also establish and open up to the citizens of our country markets that will be worth billions to us in future years.
>
> A. A. Elmore, President[29]

On March 29, Wilson passed the telegram to Hoover with this note: "Here is a telegram you ought to 'read, ponder, and inwardly digest.' It certainly is a high tribute to you and one to which I entirely subscribe."

It was decided that Hoover would continue to head the administration of food problems both at home and abroad until the harvest of 1919, by which time the critical period in the world's food supply would have passed and Hoover could rightly retire when the national task was completed.[30]

The candle of the publicity campaign, now burning low, was finally extinguished on April 1, 1919. Ben Allen, who had been the Education Director since inception of the Food Administration, sent these final words of thanks to editors and correspondents:

> The termination of the activities of the Educational Division of the Food Administration necessitates the closing of its delivery and mail service. . . .
>
> In closing, on behalf of Herbert Hoover and the personnel of the Educational Division of the Food Administration, I desire to extend to the press of this country the most heartfelt thanks for the cordial and intelligent support, without which the Food Administration could have been operated only with the utmost difficulty. The relationship of the Food Administration

> with the newspapermen was such that the Administration officials join in expressing keen regret at its termination.[31]

Ben Allen later purchased The California Farmer, and became its editor-publisher. Hoover wrote and expressed his congratulations and thanks to Allen for his untiring efforts over the years by saying:

> . . . This is by way of wishing you good luck in your new undertaking. I am sure you will be able to make the California Farmer stronger ever than in the past. There is no sort of journalism more important than the farm press for the farmer is today a businessman and he needs reliable and important information in his business more than ever before.[32]

Thus ended the close working relationship of two men who first met at Red House in London seven years earlier, and concluded one of the most significant chapters in public relations in American history.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1]Cutlip and Center, Effective Public Relations, 169.

[2]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/271.

[3]Ibid., Box 1-D/270.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., Box 1-D/274.

[6]Ibid., Box 1-D/273.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]"Wasting Less Food," The New Republic, 14:173:107.

[10]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/5.

[11]Ibid., Box 1-Q/154.

[12]Ibid., Box 1-D/273.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 198.

[17]New York Times, July 29, 1918, p. 5.

[18]Mildred Houghton Comfort, Herbert Hoover, Humanitarian (Minneapolis, 1960), 115-116.

[19]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/270.

[20]Ibid., Box 1-D/1.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., Box 1-D/5.

[23]Ibid., Box 1-D/1.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Irwin, A Reminiscent Biography, 212.

[26]Hoover Papers, 1-Q/154.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., Box 1-D/274.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid., Box 313-A.

CHAPTER V

APPRAISAL AND CONCLUSIONS

Herbert Hoover's difficulties with the press during his later political career are well recognized and documented. It was my hope to uncover evidence which might offer some explanation or indication as to whether these difficulties could have had their origin during the period of the Food Administration. The evidence supports just the opposite; in these years Hoover had a favorable working relationship with members of the press. He was also strong in his praise of the important contribution made by the news media to the success of the food program. This liaison with the press earned for him the title of "God's gift to the correspondents."

It is true that the press initially referred to him as "Food Dictator" and "Food Controller." But these labels soon disappeared and were not used after Hoover expressed his objection. This brings up an important point which has application in other areas concerning the way Hoover operated. He did not merely offer objection to these terms, he explained that their continued use would create the unfavorable connotation of food rationing and control, which was not the intent. He fought and won his point that

food conservation was everybody's job--but on a voluntary basis with the individual's conscience as his own principal judge.

Hoover's attitude toward the necessity of creating a favorable public opinion is another case in point. As mentioned earlier, Hoover had a profound regard for the power of public opinion. He used it effectively when he solicited the participation of various governments in the San Francisco World Exposition in 1915. He further demonstrated its importance while he directed the efforts of Belgian relief in Europe. Indeed, he referred to it as a "court of world opinion." Within this frame of reference, Hoover was successful in gaining the cooperation of the foreign leaders in feeding the people of Belgium and Northern France.

That Hoover continued to rely heavily on public relations as a weapon to generate public response is clearly borne out by the appeals made by the Food Administration. Through persuasive communication, Hoover explained the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the food conservation program.

One of the difficulties of historical research is the impossibility of reconstructing a series of events as they actually happened. Even after collecting the data fairly, observing it systematically, organizing it logically, and testing its parts thoroughly, the historian soon

realizes that much of the data are missing. Louis Gottschalk, in his book, Understanding History, expresses the thought:

> . . . Thus the utmost the historian can grasp of history . . . , can be nothing more than a mental image or a series of mental images based upon an application of his own experience, real and vicarious, to part of a part of a part . . . of a part of a vanished whole.
>
> In short, the historian's aim is verisimilitude. . . . He tries to get as close an approximation to the truth about the past as constant correction of his mental images will allow, at the same time recognizing that that truth has in fact eluded him forever.[1]

It is recognized that all of the facts will never be known. However, this shortcoming should not paralyze the efforts of the public relations historian in creating a verisimilitude based on the facts available. It is within this historical frame of reference that I have evaluated the evidence of Hoover's use of public relations during this period. Subsequent research may well provide new information to either support or refute these findings. This is as it should be. Nevertheless, the following conclusions represent an objective appraisal of Hoover's use of public relations during the Food Administration based on the primary and secondary source materials used in this thesis.

Success of the Public Relations Program

The public appeals made by Hoover were successful in enlisting the support of fourteen million households,

7,000 hotels and eating places, and 425,000 food dealers throughout the country.[2]

These persuasive appeals were transmitted to the public utilizing every available means of communications media, i.e., newspapers and the other print media, advertising, speeches, motion pictures, electric signs, and door to door canvassing. The Four Minute Men of the Committee on Public Information also assisted in this effort. Hoover stressed the importance of these appeals by stating: "Lest anyone believe that I personally was not vocal on the need for saving food and the reasons therefor, I may mention that between May, 1917, and the Armistice in November, 1918, I made twelve public addresses, issued sixteen press releases in my own name, and wrote twelve magazine articles." He emphasized the important contribution made by the press by adding: ". . . We are wholly and absolutely dependent upon the press of the country. If we do not receive this support, the problem is hopeless. If we do have it, it can be solved."[3]

Ben Allen obtained a significant amount of free advertising, to include billboard, streetcar, newspaper, magazine, and retail store window advertising space proclaiming that "Food Will Win the War." The amount of free advertising thus contributed was conservatively estimated at $19,417,600. A detailed breakout of the different types of advertising used is listed in Appendix A.

The use of educational institutions at all levels opened an important channel of communication to young America and was certainly an innovation at the time. The educational programs adopted in the public schools did much to educate the younger generation on the importance of saving food to help win the war.

The lectures designed by Dr. Van Hise of the University of Wisconsin enlisted the cooperation of 900 colleges and universities throughout the country in teaching the importance of food conservation. The additional function of providing information to extension workers at agricultural colleges and universities for use in educating the farmers in food matters contributed to the overall success of the campaign.

The important part played by Van Hise and others is indicative of Hoover's use of influentials to assist in educating the public in food conservation measures.

The use of libraries throughout the United States further reinforces the innovative thinking of the Education Division; and the active participation and cooperation of the national clergy also emphasized the importance of saving food in a positive manner.

The assistance of other fraternal organizations and municipal agencies joined to help in carrying the important messages of food conservation to the American people. However, Hoover's reliance on the American housewife was

the key to his success.

Hoover's creation of an effective food organization made possible the use of all of these media and methods to keep the public informed. These channels also ensured a two-way flow of information back to Washington. Hoover's policy was to "centralize ideas but decentralize execution." Every state had its own food controller who in turn worked through city and county units of volunteers familiar with local resources, conditions, and psychology.

As a volunteer himself, Hoover believed that the American volunteer spirit could be mobilized to win the struggle for food. All together, 8,000 volunteers rendered full time service to the administration; 3,000 persons, chiefly clerical assistants, were employed at salaries; and 750,000 members of communities contributed their help on a part time basis.[4]

The evidence also supports the fact that Hoover defined with some care the various publics with whom he had to deal. He also enlisted the services of qualified journalists in these various fields to ensure that the necessary expertise was available to assist in the planned effort of the various campaigns.

Hoover had access to top management and the whole-hearted support of President Wilson. In no instance did I find any major opposition by Wilson once Hoover's recommendations had been approved and announced to the general

public. There were times when Wilson either disapproved or altered Hoover's recommendations, but this was done in the planning stage. Since these differences did not deal with matters involving public relations, I conclude that Hoover and President Wilson had an excellent working relationship.

It is also evident that Hoover shared a feeling of mutual trust and confidence in his subordinates. He preferred those of proven ability, as was the case of Ben Allen and others who had previously served with him on the staff of the C.R.B. Although Allen did not habitually affix Hoover's signature to the 1,400 press releases and other campaign materials issued, the evidence supports the contention that Allen functioned in accordance with the Chief's desires.

Although international public relations has not been discussed as a separate entity, Hoover's food programs in foreign countries undoubtedly placed the reputation of the United States in a more favorable light.

But public relations was then, as is now, more than organizing publicity campaigns to win public confidence and support. Hoover was interested in people, their problems, their feelings, and their hopes and aspirations.

He held many meetings with them and the groups they represented. He wanted to know how they were doing and whether things could be done better. In analyzing the different types of feedback, Hoover wrote letters to many

editors to correct wrong impressions and to set the record straight. He answered personal letters from friends and foes alike. As far as the personal attacks made against him by Senator Reed and others, he seemed more concerned with what effect these attacks would have on food saving than on his personal reputation. The numerous articles written in the newspapers and magazines about these episodes undoubtedly helped to win the people over to Hoover's side, but there must have been moments of anguish and frustration during the interim.

The assistance of Ben Allen and other members of the Education Division in planning and conducting the many different types of appeals undoubtedly enhanced the reputation of the Food Administration. The close coordination with state and regional information offices insured uniformity of action and necessary supervision.

Some may say that Hoover's reluctance toward personal publicity may have been a weakness. As Allen admitted, he himself found it difficult at times to publicize important news events without using Hoover's name. But he apparently complied with the Chief's desires at little or no detriment to the task at hand. Hoover believed that the reputation of the institution itself should receive the public's attention and not the persons who worked for it.

This point can be argued both ways, so I will not

belabor it here. It should be noted, however, that the operation of the Food Administration enjoyed an excellent reputation, which no doubt contributed toward its effective relations with the public.

The Social Utility of Hoover's Appeals

Public relations plays a vital role by facilitating communications and understanding among all elements of our democratic, free society and its supporting institutions. Hoover placed increased emphasis on the importance and role of the mass media to keep the public informed--not only of the sacrifices expected of them, but in the accomplishments and difficulties which resulted throughout the food-saving process. Granted, his appeals were made in a national mood of patriotic motivation. Even so, his efforts enhanced the national consciousness and contributed immeasurably toward the winning of the war.

Food conservation was everyone's job, from the head of the household down to the smallest child. Hoover's appeals to the emotion of man as well as his rational processes resulted in total thought and recognition of the task at hand. The social utility of Hoover's public relations appeals assisted in promoting patriotism by expanding the national sense of responsibility and emphasizing the individual's contribution to the overall effort.

These appeals were not made in a vacuum free from other worthwhile patriotic ventures. On the contrary, the campaigns conducted by the American Red Cross and the Liberty Loan drives were equally successful in gaining popular support. But the appeals of the Food Administration had a cumulative and reinforcing effect on these other campaigns, which helped in escalating the national patriotic fervor to get on with the business of winning the war.

The concert of public opinion over the delay in passing the Food bill was heard and printed in the newspapers and magazines. The positive effect of this powerful influence was undoubtedly instrumental in getting the Food bill passed despite the opposition voiced in Congress.

The social utility of Hoover's appeals was not obscured by underlying motives either intended to corrode the channels of communication or to hide their true intent. The evidence supports Hoover's desire that the Food Administration be held strictly accountable for its actions, and right or wrong, the public had every right to know. Only in this way could Hoover insure an informed citizenry, capable of making decisions in our free society. As such, the public relations effort of the Food Administration made a major contribution to our free society.

Summary

The part played by public relations in food conservation during this critical period in American history emphasizes that public relations must be guided by two unchanging principles: first, the conviction that public opinion--the ultimate, final and supreme collective human power--is entitled to the facts in all matters of public concern; and second, that the highest purpose of public relations is to foster understanding and good will among people.[5]

This study exemplifies many values of public relations. It further illustrates that acceptable performance through two-way communication is a necessary prerequisite to successful accomplishment.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

[1]Louis Gottschalk, Understanding History (New York, 1967), 47.

[2]Mullendore, History, 12.

[3]Herbert Hoover, An American Epic (Chicago, 1960), 2:59.

[4]Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/274.

[5]John W. Hill Papers, Mass Communications History Center, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 40.

APPENDIX A

Different Types of Free Advertising
(Estimated from August 24, 1917, to January 1, 1919)

Type	Estimated Costs
53,524 sheet posters estimated on a 90-day average service per poster	$ 1,284,000
Other poster advertising, 24 and 3 sheets	1,533,600
3-sheet stands on special store corners	48,000
289 signs on federal premises	867,000
225 signs on city halls or municipal premises	787,500
973 signs on hotels	291,900
79 railroad bulletins	7,900
41 spectacular electric displays	820,000
39 illuminated bulletins	156,000
165 deluxe bulletins--sign with carved or raised columns	577,500
1,273 miscellaneous painted bulletins of various sizes	509,200
4 months' additional display, over the first year, of painted and electric signs	700,000
	$ 7,582,600

Next in importance to this outdoor space was the space used in the interior of railroad coaches. This space was used for several months, negotiation having been begun with the railroad companies prior to the organization of the Railroad Administration. Fifty thousand of these signs were on display. No national advertiser would hesitate to pay $12 per month per sign for such exclusive and dominant advertising. $4,800,000

Type	Estimated Costs
Special 36x56-inch posters, beginning with the series known as "The Women of France" and continuing with other posters, were displayed on express companies' deliveries as well as retail merchants' deliveries. The rental value was estimated at $5 each per month. With 100,000 in circulation, on the basis of six months' service, the value was estimated at ...	$ 3,000,000
Streetcar companies contributed 11x21-inch streetcar space. This was displayed in 60,000 cars with an average of two signs per car, or 120,000 signs valued at ...	$ 960,000
Other classes of space of the same kind included the elevated city roads for large special size cards and that in Fifth Avenue busses. The value was estimated at ...	$ 75,000
Newspaper and periodical advertising with other miscellaneous contributions was estimated to have a value of approximately ...	$ 3,000,000
Total	$19,417,600

Note: This does not include the salaries of volunteers who assisted in securing and devising the advertising, nor does it include the services of artists of national reputation who contributed the painted posters.

Source: Hoover Papers, Box 1-D/274, and Mullendore, History, 89-90.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Government Publications

National Archives Guide. Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1948 (Index to all U. S. Government publications printed for the U. S. Food Administration).

Books

Bernays, Edward L. Public Relations. Norman, Okla., University of Oklahoma Press, 1952.

Brandes, Joseph. Herbert Hoover and Economic Diplomacy. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962.

Clark, Delbert. Washington Dateline. New York, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1941.

Comfort, Mildred Houghton. Herbert Hoover, Humanitarian. Minneapolis, T. S. Denison & Co., Inc., 1960.

Corey, Herbert. The Truth About Hoover. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1932.

Cornwell, Elmer E., Jr. Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965.

Creel, George. How We Advertised America. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1920.

Cutlip, Scott M., and Center, Allen H. Effective Public Relations. 3d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.

Emerson, Edwin. Hoover and His Times. New York, Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., 1932.

Essary, J. Frederick. Covering Washington: Government Reflected to the Public in the Press, 1822-1926. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927.

Gottschalk, Louis. Understanding History. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.

Hampton, Vernon B. Breasting World Frontiers. Stapleton, N. Y., The John Willig Press, Inc., 1933.

Hard, William. Who's Hoover? New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., Inc., 1928.

Hoover, Herbert. The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover. 3 vols. New York, The MacMillan Co., 1952.

_____. Herbert Hoover, The Man and His Work. New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1920.

_____. The Challenge To Liberty. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934.

Irwin, Will. A Reminiscent Biography. New York, The Century Co., 1928.

Lippmann, Walter. Public Opinion. New York, The Free Press, 1922.

Lyons, Eugene. Herbert Hoover: A Biography. New York, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964.

_____. Our Unknown Ex-President. New York, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1948.

McCamy, James L. Government Publicity. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1939.

McGee, Dorothy Horton. Herbert Hoover. New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1965.

Mullendore, William C. History of the United States Food Administration. Stanford, The Stanford University Press, 1941.

_____. 27 Masters of Politics. New York, Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1949.

Reeves, Earl. This Man Hoover. New York, A. L. Burt Co., 1928.

Schwartz, James W. The Publicity Process. Ames, Iowa, The Iowa State University Press, 1967.

Smith, Charles W. Public Opinion In A Democracy. New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1929.

Sullivan, Mark. Our Times. 6 vols. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.

Surface, Frank M., and Bland, Raymond L. American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1931.

Articles

"An Average American," Time, November 18, 1935.

"A Shameful Attack," The Bellman, Vol. 23 (June 1917).

"Efficient American," The Bellman, Vol. 25 (November 1918).

Gibson, Hugh. "Herbert C. Hoover," The Century, Vol. 114 (1917).

"Herbert Hoover," Iowa Illustrated (Special Edition).

"Hoover and His Way of Bringing Things to Pass," Current Opinion, Vol. 62 (January 1917).

Hoover, Herbert. "What I Would Like Women To Do," Ladies Home Journal, Vol. 34 (August 1917).

"How Hoover Will Help," The Literary Digest, Vol. 54 (June 1917).

"Instead of Revolution," The New Republic, Vol. 14, No. 174 (March 1918).

Irwin, Will. "Hoover As An Executive," The Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 192 (March 1920).

Kellogg, Vernon. "Herbert Hoover As I Know Him," Outlook, Vol. 147 (October 1927).

_____. "Herbert Hoover, As Individual and Type," Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 121 (1918).

_____. "The Authentic Story of Belgian Relief," The World's Work, Vol. 34 (1917).

"Letter To You From Mr. Hoover," Good Housekeeping, Vol. 65 (October 1917).

Waldron, Web. "About This Man Hoover," Collier's, April 3, 1920.

"Wasting Less Food," The New Republic, Vol. 14, No. 173 (February 1918).

Newspapers

New York Times, 1917; 1918; 1919.

New York Herald, 1919.

Washington Post, 1918; 1919.

Los Angeles Express, 1918.

Unpublished Materials

Allen, Victoria French. "The Outside Man." 4 vols. An unpublished manuscript on the life of Ben S. Allen. On file in Box AC-104, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa.

John W. Hill Papers, Mass Communications History Center, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 40.

Hoover, Herbert. Personal papers and other official correspondence on the U. S. Food Administration on file in the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa. This material includes printed reports, U. S. Government publications, press releases, and promotional literature used during the period of the Food Administration.

Van Hise, C. R. This collection is located in the University of Wisconsin Memorial Library Archives and consists of personal papers of Dr. C. R. Van Hise, President of the University of Wisconsin during the period of the Food Administration, 1917-1919. Box 75, folder entitled, "Defense of Van Hise's Wartime Activities," lists the contribution made to the Food Administration by Dr. Van Hise and the University of Wisconsin.

APPROVED Scott M. Cuttip

DATE Jan. 13, 1969