

A WORLD-WIDE PLAN FOR THE RELIEF OF STARVING CHILDREN.

EXTRACT OF SPEECH BY DR. AAKE ORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF NURSES.

Dr. Ording, one of the Norwegian delegates to the United Nations, during the debates on Post-UNRRA relief, conceived of the idea of a one Day's Pay Collection for the rehabilitation of the children of devastated countries as a means for the people of every country to take part in the international work of the United Nations.

Addressing the Assembly, he said: "You have chosen the ambitious job of healing the wounds of the individual human mind and body. The United Nations have taken upon them the responsibility of healing the wounds of peoples, societies and nations. May I take it that you agree with me that this job is almost as hard? . . . Loss of population has been estimated from 0.8 per cent. in the United Kingdom to 17 per cent. in Poland.

"What about those who are left? More than half the world's population is undernourished. More than a third is facing actual starvation. More than 60 million children and adolescents are depending upon foreign relief if they are to survive without permanent injury or even death.

"In some countries one in three of all children born are dying within the first year of life. Tuberculosis, rickets and other diseases are following in the wake of undernourishment and finishing the job.

"Surely this is a challenge to our whole civilisation. The war against Hitler was won. BUT THE WAR AGAINST HUNGER HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN!

"Where are the means to meet this challenge? Do we have them? We all know the tremendous increase in our productive capacity during the war. In almost every country new peaks were reached in output and efficiency. Now we are on the threshold of the atomic age. Opportunities, difficult to measure in their effect not only in the field of physics but also in social life and the human mind, are opening up before us. Surely the question is not, if we have the capacity, the question is, what are we going to give first priority! Are we prepared to accept the priority of peace as we did the priority of war and to bow our individual will to co-operate for a common purpose?

"The question of distribution is substantially the same. Do you know that in this second year after the end of the war citrus fruits are rotting, potatoes are being thrown to pigs and fish thrown back into the sea—all because we haven't transport.

"Yet you can remember the wonders performed in transport during the war. Tons and thousands of tons of guns and ammunition were brought overseas and over mountains, through the heat of the desert and the ice of the arctic to reach their destructive goal. Again the question is not whether we can achieve the technical facilities but of moral choice. WHAT COMES FIRST? WHAT IS IMPORTANT? A STARVING CHILD OR A NEW CAR?

"We can if we will. Will we? Or is 60 million children too great an idea to be grasped?

"Only a few days ago a picture of five pitifully ragged children illustrated a leading article in a New York newspaper under the head: "Betraying Children?" I have come here to tell you that United Nations has decided that these children shall not be betrayed and I have come to ask your help. . . .

Unilateral governmental action is being arranged. You have heard about the bills introduced in the Congress of this country. Three hundred and fifty million dollars for general relief in certain European countries, 400 million dollars for Greece and Turkey. Other governments are considering what should be their share. The fact remains that all this will not be nearly enough to feed those 60

million children, who are in need of a daily supplementary meal . . . at the price of some six cents each . . . a price that in a year amounts to less than 20 dollars each . . . or some 600 million dollars . . . allowing for a similar sum to be contributed by the receiving countries themselves.

"These are big sums. But may I suggest that having passed through the last war we should not be too easily frightened by big figures. The sum I have just mentioned is not more than two days expenses for the war on the part of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada alone. We had five years of sweat and toil on the part of the whole world for war. What if we all of us had one SINGLE DAY'S WORK FOR PEACE?

"The suggestion is so simple that it almost seems like the solution of a fairy tale. But it is not only simple—it is true. So true that the representatives of 55 nations at the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously decided to present this idea for implementation and the representatives at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, at its last session on March 29, unanimously passed a resolution to put this project into practice.

"Here are the main points: The idea is that everyone everywhere should contribute ONE DAY'S PAY or a similar measurement (adaptable in each country) to conquer starvation among the world's children. This plan is not limited to wage-earners. In some countries the employers may match the sum given by his employees. Farmers may give one day's milk supply or a portion of the acreage. Professional workers may give one three-hundred-and-sixty-fourth of their yearly income. In a country like China a bowl of rice might be the symbol.

This is a voluntary non-Governmental effort. . . .

"The headlines in the newspapers are talking about a divided world and a new war. The people everywhere are telling a different story. In the last two months I have had the opportunity of talking with people in all walks of life, from fishermen in Norway to Mid-western American farmers, and business men in Wall Street. You may not believe it, but it is true that if the case of these starving children of the world is put to them clearly they feel all of them the same common responsibility.

"Through their big organisations, Labour, Farmers, Employers and very important voluntary societies have decided to join this big enterprise. Now I appeal to you. Gathering here from most of the countries of the world and considering the agenda you have already turned your eyes upon the suffering of the individuals. . . . I now ask you to look upon their problems on a world scale.

"This is your opportunity. Going back to your countries you can bring with you this idea for a new world . . . this plan:

"ONE DAY'S PAY FOR ONE FREE WORLD IS THE SLOGAN 'SAVE THE CHILDREN—SAVE THE PEACE.'"

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