

## Let them eat grain

The difficulties a Nebraskan might have in comprehending the possibility of a world famine aren't too different from the problems a hermit might encounter when contemplating a population explosion. A 10-minute drive from downtown Lincoln can put a person into some of the most productive farm land in the nation.

But beyond America's borders, the threat of starvation is a constant companion to some. Mexico is an example. It has only 7,600 square miles of arable land and its population is booming. In 1950 it was 25 million. Today it is 52 million. By 1990, according to Mexican government estimates, it will be almost 100 million, about half the population of the United States.

Its limited agricultural resources already force it to import tons of raw foodstuffs from the U.S. The same is true with the Soviet Union, Japan and India.

This demand on U.S. food supplies has helped send prices soaring. The beef price freeze and subsequent shortages this summer were a reflection of what other nations have faced for generations. The events of this summer already have begun to affect our patterns of consumption. U.S. government experts have said there appears to be an increase in the amount of meat substitutes consumed by the average American.

But this sort of change is not enough. If we are to ward off fears of chronic food shortages and not jeopardize our international balance of trade by

curtailing agricultural exports, a more massive change in habits is needed.

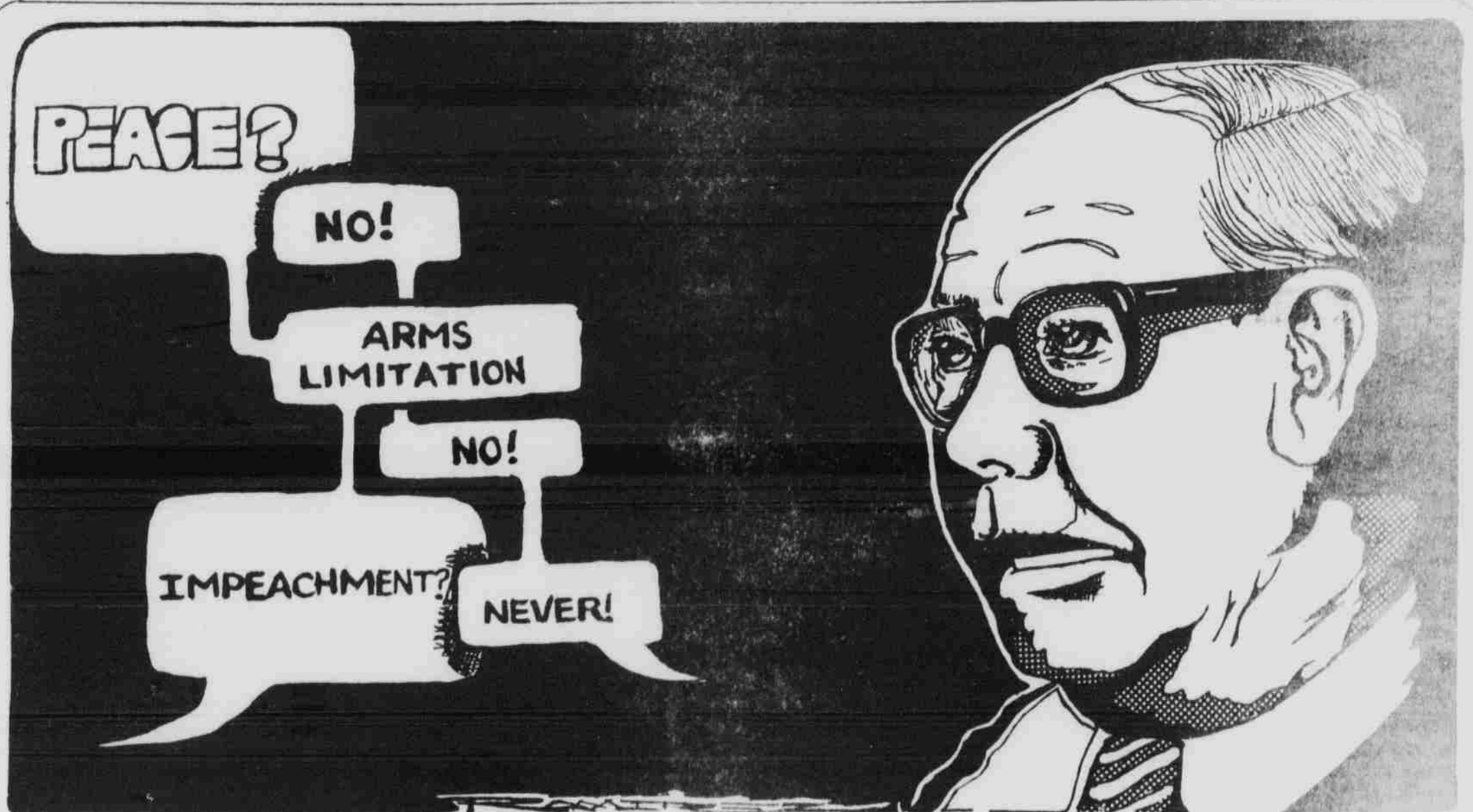
We are a nation of meat eaters. And to recommend a change from that diet might, in Nebraska, border on heresy. But a change is needed. For instance, Nebraska cattle each is fed about 21 pounds of plant protein to produce one pound of meat protein. Half of the harvested agricultural land in the nation is planted with feed crops, and 78 per cent of our grain is fed to animals. This is higher than any other country in the world. Russia feeds about 25 per cent of its grain to animals, and developing countries feed animals between 2 and 10 per cent of their's.

Some will say meat is necessary to a balanced diet, but there is too much evidence to the contrary. Recent research has shown that plant proteins complement one another and provide a protein as complete as that of meat while supplying about twice the amount of vitamins and minerals found in fish and meat.

Not only does the American diet demand the use of more protein to produce less of it for the table, but the demands for this less valuable food are increasing. In 1940, per capita consumption of beef in the United States was 55 pounds a year. It now is 117 pounds.

We cannot expect to feed ourselves and the world if we allow this sort of waste to continue. A change of eating habits is in order, even if that T-bone looks and tastes better than soyburgers.

Michael (O.J.) Nelson



## Whatever the question, Nebraska votes no

Nebraska has two votes in the U.S. Senate. They are both "no," and have been for a long time.

Reading the results of roll call votes in Congress is enlightening. Obviously, it's much more confusing to be in the House of Representatives. Congressmen Charles Thone, Dave Martin and John McCollister vote all sorts of ways: "yes," or "no," or whatever the issue seems to call for.

No such mayhem in the Senate, though. Nebraska votes "no," whatever the question. A legend, but a believable one, says that Sen. Carl Curtis once cast his "no" at what he thought was the appropriate time.

"But, Senator," the President of the Senate said, "the roll call is merely to determine whether you are in the chamber. The junior senator from Nebraska is in the chamber, is he not?"

"Hmph, er, um, of course." Alas, poor man, he just couldn't say it.

Some have argued that the two senators vote as President Richard Nixon tells them to. Nixon is against a lot of things so Curtis and Roman Hruska are, too, or so the story goes.

Well, that rumor needs some amendment. If Nixon is opposed, Nebraska's senators are, indeed, opposed. And if a "yes" vote means "no," as it often

does in deliberative bodies, they both vote "yes" ("no"). But if the President is "for" something or doesn't take a position, they vote "no," to avoid confusion. That does avoid confusion, doesn't it? Well, doesn't it?

Some of the things the two have been against lately include:

1. The war powers bill, deciding once and for all, (as if the Constitution didn't), that Congress shall have the power to declare war.

keith landgren  
**desperate remedies**

2. The minimum wage bill, raising the amount paid the nation's poor to a slightly less insulting

figure. The bill passed, but Nebraska's senators had the last laugh: the President vetoed the bill.

3. The proposal to cut off funding for the continuation of the war in Laos and Cambodia.

Then there are Curtis' and Hruska's noses on other issues. Curtis was a leader in the opposition to the Watergate hearings this summer.

Hruska, in New Orleans last August, was against increased gun control. But he was "for" a tax plan else that same day: the grain sales to Russia.

Actually, the main problem isn't their occasional negativism. It's that they've been around so long, and have piled up a lot of seniority. Both were elected in the 1950s and now Hruska is the fifty-eighth Republican in the Senate. Curtis is right behind him, ranked sixth. People tend to listen to senators with all the force of senility, er, seniority behind them.

There's a remedy for all this and, yes, it's pretty desperate: J. James Exon for senator in 1970.

Now, people will say: "Hey, wait a minute. J. James Exon isn't exactly a progressive. He should say 'no' quite a bit, too. Gosh, he's an awful lot like Curtis and Hruska."

Well, all that is absolutely true. But it won't be wouldn't have any seniority.