

Show and tell, 'learn a White House comes at domestic/econd

Butz shuffles slices, jousts with J. J.

By Dick Piersol

Omaha—Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz played a little show and tell with those attending the White House Conference on Domestic and Economic Affairs Wednesday. He also carried on a verbal joust with Gov. J. James Exon that up to now has appeared only in print.

Butz opened a loaf of bread and demonstrated how much of the cost of that loaf went to the farmer who produced the wheat that made it. Two slices and a heel, at a cost of about seven cents, was roughly the share the farmer got, according to Butz.

The rest of the cost of the loaf, he said, went to the middlemen between the farmer and the consumer. Butz said it costs more to deliver bread from the baker to the grocer than the farmer receives in producing wheat for a loaf.

Exon questions

Later, as Exon took the microphone to ask Butz a question, Butz told Exon he could use the somewhat unstable podium which had caused several interruptions in Butz's bread demonstration.

Exon replied, "I'd rather be down here with the people."

Exon has publicly called for Butz's resignation or dismissal on several occasions.

Saying it was the responsibility of all agricultural leaders, himself and Butz included, to stop driving a wedge between consumers and farmers, Exon said their long-range interests are the same. He said one of Butz's comments—that truck drivers should start working as hard as farmers—was unnecessary.

At a press conference later, Butz referred to politicians using food prices as

an issue as demagogues.

When asked if he considered Exon a demagogue, he replied, "I don't have to dip that low. I'm a bit of a demagogue myself, at times."

Butz said the chances for an early end to the embargo on grain sales to the Soviet Union and Poland are good. He said the United States and Russia are "quite close" to a long-term agricultural trade agreement.

Chances that further grain sales to Russia this year would cause domestic food prices to rise are slim, according to Butz. He said the market has already absorbed the effects of potential sales.

The agriculture secretary also said that the recent 3 per cent price increase in wholesale farm products would have little or no effect on food prices.

Union criticized

Butz said criticism of the sales to Russia is either alarmist or politically motivated. He also criticized the AFL-CIO's longshoremen for their refusal to load grain bound for Russia.

"If those unions were really interested in the cost of food for an Omaha housewife, they'd quit the kind of featherbedding that really contributes to increases in the cost of living. These grain sales are necessary to the American farmer," Butz said.

He said most food price increases are caused by food industry labor union featherbedding, which is padding the payroll with unnecessary laborers.

"One example is this. This morning, about 100 trucks left Sioux City (Iowa) half loaded with whole beef carcasses. That is because there is a rule in the meatcutters union that those carcasses can't be cut up

until they reach the market in New York or Boston," Butz said.

Grain indictments

Other topics discussed by the agriculture secretary:

—Butz called recent indictments handed down in New Orleans for alleged deliberate misgrading of grain "unfortunate." He said part of the problem is that grain is the only agricultural commodity inspected by private companies.

Butz said he wants public inspection but there is a problem with getting the manpower and money necessary to do it.

He said legislation is pending in Congress to give the agriculture secretary more power to deal with what he said were "so-called scandals."

Butz said as long as he is agriculture secretary, the government will not buy grain and store it in reserve. He said a sufficient reserve is being held by elevators and farmers.

Farmer complains

—One Papio valley farmer told Butz he had written several letters to him complaining of Army Corps of Engineers plans to take 18,000 acres out of farm production and had never received a reply. Butz said that was an unusual case and would check it when he returned to Washington.

—Butz said the nation is just starting to use its "agripower" to its own advantage and to the benefit of the rest of the world.

He quotes Mahatma Gandhi, the 20th century Indian political and spiritual leader, saying that even God dare not approach a hungry man except in the form of bread.

"That's the language we're prepared to speak."



Secretary of Ag

Environment chief swats at DDT critics

By Dick Piersol

Omaha—As administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Russell Train is responsible for the largest public works program in the nation's history—granting federal money to finance municipal waste treatment in cities across the nation.

Train said the total cost probably would be about \$60 billion, although the total of states' estimates runs as high as \$350 billion.

Last year, \$3.6 billion was granted, \$5.5 billion will be spent this year and Train said \$6 billion will be allocated in the next fiscal year.

The figures do not include the costs of cleaning up America's industrial waste. That task may take \$5 billion to \$10 billion per year until the job is done, Train said.

Question raised

Train was one of the participants in the White House Conference on Domestic and Economic Affairs in Omaha. He had not been in town more than a few hours when he said one of his colleagues raised a question he called "widely misunderstood."

At a meeting of Ford Administration officials and area newspaper publishers Tuesday night, Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz mentioned the ban on the use of DDT in effect since 1972, Train said.

Newspapers in Dallas, Oklahoma City and a House of Representatives Agricultural Committee minority report recently have accused the EPA of encouraging outbreaks of encephalitis by not allowing the

use of DDT on disease-carrying mosquitoes.

"That is just not true," Train said. "When the ban on DDT was made, the EPA made it clear that it could be used in health emergencies. There is not one application for its use on file in Washington or any of the regional offices."

Other insecticides

Train said mosquitoes are practically immune to DDT and that at least twelve other insecticides in common use could do the job.

He said he has personally approved the use of DDT, since its ban, in a case involving rabid bats.

"There are some people around who just want to discredit the EPA," he said. "I notice Secretary Butz brought up DDT a couple of times in his talks today."

Train said citizens encourage spending hundreds of millions of dollars on cures for cancer, but when the EPA tries to isolate and eliminate carcinogens (cancer-causing agents) from the environment, he is accused of being an alarmist.

Medical bill

He said the United States has the highest annual medical bill in the world—\$95 billion—and that little of that is spent controlling communicable diseases.

"Americans' health is endangered most by stress, noise, chemicals and carcinogens. Respiratory ailments caused by hydrocarbons, particulates, sulfates and everything else floating around in the air are killing people every day. We need to spend a lot of money to prevent those

conditions.

"The total costs of cleaning up the environment are going to be about one per cent of the gross national product—maybe a little higher. But there is a net profit in that effort," he said.

"Aside from the citizens' health, consider the advantages of clean water for recreation and the aesthetic value of it all. It's damned hard to quantify what it's really worth to the nation."

African safaris

Train said his concern for the environment began in the mid 1950s, "when I went on a couple of fancy safaris in Africa."

"The British were running East Africa then," he said. "They were abusing the wilderness, the parks and game reserves and weren't training any Africans in wildlife management."

"I started helping African students come to the U.S. to study at wildlife management and conservation schools."

At that time he was head of the tax legal staff in the Treasury Dept. Later, President Eisenhower appointed him judge of the U.S. Tax Court. In 1966 he started the Conservation Foundation, a privately financed research and education group.

During the first Nixon Administration, Train was undersecretary of the Interior and later chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality. He became administrator of the EPA in September 1973.

Tired of taxes

"I got tired of taxes and gradually went to full-time conservation work," he said.

Russell Train, administrator of the

Train said the EPA also is working to decrease America's dependence on fossil fuels.

"We spent \$12 million on solar energy research last year. This year we're spending \$60 million."

"Solar energy may soon be practical for individual homeowners," he said. "But it will be years before we can mass produce energy that way. The President has his swimming pool with solar energy now."

Energy possibilities

Train said he is chairman of a 14-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization committee studying geothermal and solar energy possibilities. He said several European nations have much more information