

FOR CIRCULATION:

Gov. Ransom ✓

Gov. Evans ✓

Gov. Szymczak ✓

Gov. McKee ✓

Gov. Draper ✓

(Please return to Chairman's  
Office.)

PERSONAL

AND

CONFIDENTIAL

June 4, 1945

The President  
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

Mr. R. E. McConnell of the War Department has told me what is expected in the European food assignment. In the light of that information and after full consideration I am convinced that I could not handle it satisfactorily and that it would be a mistake for me to attempt it.

Since receiving your letter I have tried without success to whip up a spirit of willingness to return at this late hour and undertake the job of organization described by Mr. McConnell. The task is not one that has arisen out of a sudden emergency. The situation and the need have been foreseen for a long time. It is impossible to believe that in the many government organizations charged with food management some competent men have not been planning for this responsibility. By this time some one of them should be prepared to assume and administer it.

I do not agree that I am singularly equipped for this assignment; there are others who by reason of recent contact with the problems and with available personnel are much better qualified than I. In a recent telegram to Mr. McConnell I mentioned one, John B. Hutson in Judge Vinson's organization, who has had experience in Central Europe and continuous connection with the War Food organizations.

The younger men in food processing and distribution are largely unknown to me. I have been out of direct touch with food and agriculture for nine years, except for the year 1940-41 spent as member of the National Defense Advisory Commission, and the three months in 1943 with the Food Administration. For both periods the Federal Reserve authorities granted me leave, but since then the duties and responsibilities of the Federal Reserve banks have increased.

Needless to say, it leaves me very unhappy to reply in this way to your request, but in view of the considerations outlined I hope you will excuse me.

Sincerely yours,

Chester C. Davis

CCD:CMS