



As part of a long standing commitment to support youth development, Coca-Cola USA sponsored the Miss America of Elkhorn Talent and Beauty Pageant held recently in St. Louis during the Elks 80th annual convention. Twenty-one contestants ranging in age from 16 to 20, each sponsored by a state Elks chapter, were judged in beauty, poise, talent and swimsuit competitions. The pageant winner received a \$3,000 scholarship. Coca-Cola USA has sponsored the Miss America of Elkhorn Pageant for more than 20 years. This year, the company also gave trophies, cooler bags, and T-shirts to each of the contestants. Pictured (left to right) are William S. Patterson, Elks Grand Commissioner of Beauty and Talent; Harold Stone, manager of Program Development, Community Affairs, Coca-Cola USA; Ramona Coleman, Miss Tennessee and Miss America of Elkhorn 1985; Donald P. Wilson, Elks Grand Exalted Ruler; and Marcia Fingal, Miss New Jersey and pageant first runner-up.

Non-Recession Year Poverty Rate Increases

New income and poverty figures recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau show that poverty remained at unusually high levels for a non-recession year in 1984 while the poverty rate for young black children set a record high, according to an analysis of the census data by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The center's analysis also found that gaps between black and white income widened in 1984, and that the gap between low income and high income families in the U.S. grew to its largest point since the end of World War II.

The new figures show that the national poverty rate declined from 15.3 percent in 1983 to 14.4 percent in 1984. The number of Americans below the poverty line in 1984 was 23,700,000. However, 14.4 percent was the highest year since 1986 and was far above the poverty rates of the 1970s.

"Poverty always comes down when the economy emerges from a recession," center director Robert Greenstein said. "What is deeply disturbing about these figures is that despite economic growth, poverty came down so little - less than one percentage point."

"The 1984 poverty rate was far above the poverty rates in 1976 and 1977 when unemployment was at about the same levels as it was in 1984," he added.

The center warned that since unemployment has stopped dropping in 1985 and since wages in 1985 are lower than in 1984, no further significant drop in poverty is expected in 1985.

"The modest drop in poverty in 1984 seems to be all the reduction we're going to get for some time unless federal policies change,"

Greenstein commented. "This means that poverty may be stuck at a new plateau where eighty-nine million more Americans are in poverty than in the mid-1970s."

The center's analysis also noted an alarming trend toward increased poverty among children, especially minority children. Approximately 21.3 percent of all children were poor in 1984, a rate one-third greater than in 1976 and 1977, even though unemployment rates were about the same in these three years.

Moreover, while poverty among all U.S. children dropped some from 1983 to 1984, the decrease occurred entirely among white children. For young black children, poverty hit an all-time high.

Of black children under the age of six, 51.1 percent, more than one of every two were poor in 1984, the Census Bureau report shows. This is the highest level ever recorded since the Bureau began collecting data on poverty among young black children in 1970.

"The figures for poverty among black children are very troubling," Greenstein noted. "It is hard to understand how White House communications director Patrick Buchanan can hail the new poverty figures as 'unambiguous good news.'"

The new census data also show widening gaps between both rich and poor and blacks and whites, according to the center's analysis. While median family income for whites rose last year, there was no statistically significant change in median black family income despite the economic recovery (median family income is the income of the typical family; at the median income, half of all families have higher incomes while half have

lower incomes).

Moreover, from 1980 to 1984, white median income went up slightly (by \$75, after adjusting for inflation), but black median family income fell by \$350 - substantially widening the gap between typical white and typical black families.

This same pattern shows up in widening gaps between rich and poor, the center found. It reported that the census data show gaps between rich and poor in America to be greater than at any other time since the end of World War II.

The poorest 40 percent of American families received a smaller share of the national income in 1984

than at any time since the Census Bureau began collecting this data in 1947. At the same time, the wealthiest 40 percent received a larger share of the national income than at any time since 1947.

"The new census data provide persuasive evidence that the gains of the economic recovery are not being evenly shared, and that both the budget cuts of recent years and growing inequality of income are helping to keep poverty rates high despite some recovery from the recession," the center stated.

Further evidence of the widening gap between rich and poor show up in other Census figures, as well.

World Food Need Estimates Decline

During 1985-86, 69 developing countries will require an estimated nine million tons of cereals in excess of estimated commercial imports to maintain consumption at existing (status quo) levels. This is down 2.4 million tons from the previous estimate in July and 2.7 million below assessed needs in 1984-85. To meet minimum nutritional standards, the countries would need 18.6 million tons, a 730,000-ton decline from the July projection and 7 million tons less than estimated 1984-85 needs.

Stock rebuilding by the 69 countries would require an additional 980,000 tons of cereals in addition to consumption needs. However, physical restraints will allow the countries to absorb only about 15.3 million tons, 3.6 million less than the July estimate. Maximum absorbable food needs are currently pegged at 6.3 million tons for Sub-Saharan Africa, 5.2 million in Asia, and one million for Latin America.

In Africa, additional status-quo import needs are projected at 4.5 million tons, down about 1.6 million tons from the July forecast, based on a lowered assessment for Sub-Saharan Africa and an upward revision for North Africa. Most of the decline in Sub-Saharan needs, down 1.7 million tons to around 2.6 million, occurred in East Africa, where cereal crops have recovered more than anticipated in July. The relatively small 80,000-ton increase in assessed North African needs masks a large production-based decline in Tunisia and a finance-based increase in Egypt.

Compared with a year earlier, status-quo needs for the entire Sub-Saharan region are down 46 percent. East African requirements are down 40 percent, although crop failures and civil disturbances have generated needs of 980,000 tons. Needs are down 770,000 tons in Southern Africa, 690,000 in West

Africa, and 1.1 million in North Africa. In contrast, Central African requirements have declined only 90,000 tons. Stock rebuilding would add another 600,000 tons to Africa's total status-quo needs, with East Africa alone requiring a further 450,000. In some countries, stock-building needs may be met by carryover supplies of cereal aid delivered in 1984-85.

Status-quo needs for all of Asia, projected at 3.5 million tons, are 1.2 million tons above estimated 1984-85 needs. Since July, South Asian needs have been revised downward by 900,000 tons, reflecting improved production in Pakistan and revised estimates of Bangladesh's 1984-85 rice production, cereal imports, and stocks. Pakistan's status-quo needs, however, remain large. In Southeast Asia, needs are higher than indicated in July, due to a smaller expected 1985-86 corn crop and a deteriorating financial outlook in the Philippines. While Philippine requirements have been revised upward, they are still below those of 1984-85. Overall, Asian stock adjustment needs are low relative to additional food needs.

Latin America's status-quo needs for 1985-86 have been reduced 530,000 tons from the July forecast, due mainly to improved conditions in Peru, where increased foreign reserves and exports have raised commercial import capacity. At an estimated 347,000 tons, total Latin American needs are 1.1 million tons below the 1984-85 figure, reflecting large financial reserves that permit increased commercial imports. However, the large reserves result mainly from smaller payments on outstanding debt rather than reduced indebtedness. Debt-service payments will be high even if countries reschedule their debt to the same extent as in previous years. South American stock adjustment requirements are high relative to food needs.

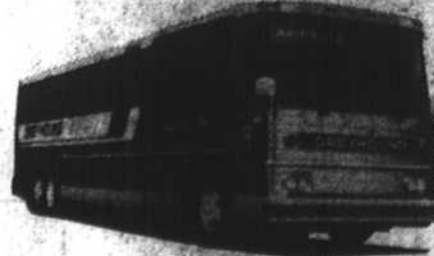
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