

Everyone a Food Controller

Intelligent Food Economy is Necessary to Fill the Haversacks and the Dinner Pails

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A world shortage of food has created a very grave situation for those who are responsible for the carrying on of the war by the allied nations. There is no likelihood of shortage of food, no danger of famine in Canada, which on the contrary, will have a large surplus of food for export. But there is very grave danger of serious embarrassment to the governments of the Allied countries from shortage of food for the armies and lack of adequate food at reasonable prices for the industrial populations in Great Britain, France and Italy.

To help to an understanding of what has been called the food crisis I would remind your readers of a few of the contributing causes to the present real danger of a world famine in 1918. The harvests of 1915 having been abundant, the food situation during the first two years of the war caused no very serious anxiety. Then came a succession of changes, the cumulative effect of which has produced the present very dangerous and threatening situation. Partly from unfavorable weather, partly from the want of labor, partly from the inability to obtain fertilizers, the cereal crops of the world, that is, wheat, rye, barley, oats and Indian corn, yielded about 16 per cent. less in 1916 than in 1915. That meant about 2,000,000,000 bushels less of these grains harvested in 1916 than in 1915. In Canada the harvest of wheat, oats and barley in 1916 was only 61 per cent. of that in 1915.

The great war in its various undertakings by the armies, munition-making and transportation has taken about thirty million workers off the land; it has diverted their labor into other occupations. Instead of being producers of food they have become consumers of food on an unprecedented scale. Then there is the destruction of food by the hideous attacks of the submarines. Even before the submarines in their unrestricted and murderous campaign had done so much, men best in a position to know kept proclaiming the need for greater production and the need for the prevention of all waste of food.

While there is no occasion for the alarm of panic, there are very small reserves of food; and in the event of such a comparative failure of crops in 1918 as there was in 1916 the world might be faced with actual famine conditions and the inevitable starvation to death of millions of human beings. So, while there is no occasion for the agitation of alarm, there is plenty of reason for intelligent organized and sustained action to prevent disaster from overtaking us.

Everyone to be a Food Controller

The personal effort of individuals is the only way whereby the supply of food can be increased. Under modern conditions one cannot expect the earth to receive a miraculous shower of manna. A Niagara of wheat to fill the empty granaries and elevators is not to be expected. Food comes from single plants produced by nature in co-operation with the intelligent labor of individuals. All over Canada farmers and gardeners have done their best to increase the quantity of food which is available. It is now necessary to be just as diligent in conserving what has been produced, in preventing all waste and in shifting our own consumption from flour, beef and bacon, which the armies and civilian populations need from us, to other foods which cannot be sent overseas.

To direct and help all the people to do this necessary work the government has appointed a food controller. The Hon. W. J. Hanna, one of the able and public-spirited citizens of Canada, accepted the office without salary. By his appointment to this responsible and necessary service, the food controllers required, as part of his duty: "To ascertain the food requirements of Canada and to facilitate the export of the surplus to Great Britain and her Allies." It is also his duty to make regulations, "providing for the conservation of food and the prevention of waste thereof and governing the consumption of food in hotels, restaurants, cafes, private houses, clubs and other places."

The plan of action which the food controller has laid out at

the beginning of his campaign indicates as the general objects to be accomplished:—

- (a) To have available as large a quantity as possible of suitable foods for the Allied armies.
- (b) To have available as large a quantity as possible of suitable foods for the civilian population of Great Britain and her Allies.
- (c) To have sufficient and suitable food at reasonable prices for the civilian population of Canada. The means through these general ends can be accomplished are:—
 - (a) Increase in the production of foods.
 - (b) Elimination of waste in the handling and use of foods.
 - (c) Shifting of the consumption, in part, from foods needed for the armies and civilian population of Great Britain and the Allies, chiefly wheat and flour, beef and bacon to other foods which are and can be produced in abundance in Canada.
 - (d) Prevention of unfair profits from the handling of food and of unnecessary increase in prices of foods.

The necessary means can be applied and the necessary objects can be realized only by intelligent organized efforts and the willing co-operation of all the people.

Substantial Results are Expected

As has already been stated, what the armies and civilians of Great Britain and the Allies require most from Canada are flour, beef and bacon. They also require and take a very large quantity of cheese and some other food stuffs. The immediate object of the organization of a provincial committee and of local food economy committees is to help and to enable all the people to do their share in permitting large quantities of these foods to be available for export. Every housekeeper can become an effective volunteer in the great army of food controllers.

What may be expected as a result of the food control service by the voluntary action of the housekeepers of Canada? The saving of only one pound of flour per week in every home in Canada would result in having 30,000,000 pounds of flour a year

for export more than would otherwise be the case. The food control office estimates that the saving in Canada of flour, beef and bacon will be sufficient to provide much more of these foods for a year than would be required by an army of 500,000 men. It comes down to this: in preventing waste and in shifting consumption that there must be control of single slices and single bites.

Methods to be Followed

In this part of this campaign two methods have been adopted by the food controller. In the first place he has issued regulations having the force of law to restrict the consumption of beef, bacon and white bread at public meeting places.

In the second place all housekeepers are urged and requested to go at least as far in their own homes in the conservation of these foods as is required by law in public eating places. The compulsory regulation and the voluntary co-operation are both necessary. In times of peace the quantities and kinds of food consumed in one's home is a matter of personal taste, limited only by the extent of one's ability to pay. In this time of war the regulation of one's consumption of food has been changed from a matter of personal preference to an obligation of honor to perform a public duty. Compliance with the recommendations involves no hardship, requires no sacrifice; and at the same time enables all housekeepers to participate in a very real and effective way in "win the war" service. In its final analysis the situation will be saved by the growing of single plants, the regulation of single bites and the prevention of any bit of waste.

Pledge Cards to Be Signed

The local food economy committee in every place will be the body by which information will be passed on to the individual householders. As a first step, the women of the local food economy committee will undertake to personally distribute the food service pledge cards. The intention is to have every home visited by some woman who will interest the housekeeper in food control and ask her to sign the following pledge.

"Realizing the gravity of the food situation and knowing that Great Britain and her Allies look to Canada to help to shatter Germany's threat of starvation, I pledge myself and my household to carry out conscientiously the advice and directions of the food controller that requisite food stuffs may be released for export to the Canadian divisions, the British forces and people and the Allied armies and nations."

One copy will be returned in the house and one passed on to the provincial headquarters. Together with the pledge card, a card for display in the window of the house will be left. It shows that the family is committed to food control and becomes a daily reminder to the household and others who see it of the duty of observing the pledge. The window card is as follows:

"To win the war this household is pledged to carry out conscientiously the advice and directions of the food controller."

Substitutes for Flour, Beef, Bacon

The local food economy committee will also arrange, for the carrying on of a campaign of education in the more intelligent and economical use of foods in order that the people may be well nourished, that no food may be wasted, and that the food of the family may be obtained at the most reasonable cost that is practicable under war conditions. While many housekeepers have knowledge of the relative value of foods, many others have not had any opportunity of learning. It will not be news to many housekeepers that oatmeal is a first-rate breakfast dish. It may be news and good news in these times of high prices that for growing children and working men and women, in terms of nourishment and energy produced, one pound of oatmeal is a practical substitute for two dozen eggs; one pound of oatmeal may be used to replace one and three-quarter pounds of beef; one pound of cheese has a nourishing value equal to two pounds of beef; four

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AN HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH

The photograph which is reproduced herewith recalls one of the important events in the history of the grain growers' organization of the prairie provinces. It shows the first Grain Growers' delegation that ever went to Ottawa and demanded from the government a redress of grievances for the prairie farmers. The delegates arrived in Ottawa and met the government on May 5, 1903. The delegation consisted only of the four men shown in the photograph. They were D. W. McLaughlin, president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, W. R. Motherwell, president of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (now Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan), J. W. Gillespie, executive officer of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association and R. C. Henderson, vice-president (now president) of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association.

The delegation impressed upon the government the necessity for legislation amending several of the provisions of the Canada Grain Act, particularly they urged that the distribution clause should be amended to give farmers the right to get cars in turn with the elevators. As a result of their representations, this request was acceded to and the Canada Grain Act was amended at the ensuing session of parliament.

While in Ottawa the delegation received every possible assistance from Walter Scott, afterwards premier of Saskatchewan, who worked with them day and night and gave them very effective help. The late Senator Findlay Young also assisted the delegation considerably.