

Canned Foods Are Not Dangerous

Early in the nineteenth century the modern methods of canning food was discovered by M. Appert a Parisian confectioner. Knowledge of the discovery crossed the Atlantic and a small commercial beginning was made in a crude way in New York in 1819 with the canning of fish.

The National Canners' Association celebrated the centenary of that event in New York by declaring to the country, on the authority of Dr. M. J. Roseneau and a group of distinguished college scientists, that there is no such thing as "ptomaine poisoning" in food.

For three years Dr. Roseneau, who is head of the department of preventive medicine and hygiene at Harvard, assisted by nearly a score of bacteriologists in such institutions as Harvard, Yale, Johns Hopkins, University of Chicago and University of Michigan, has been making a careful and extensive investigation of the subject.

The first thing that struck the doctors, said Dr. Roseneau, was the relative scarcity of cases of illness which could really be attributed to food. When the work was begun the impression prevailed that "ptomaine poisoning" was one of the commonest ailments. Many cases were studied, but most of them proved to be due to some other cause than food poisoning.

Practically all the cases that came to our attention (said Dr. Roseneau) were traced either to fresh food or home-packed products. Fresh foods, especially when prepared as salads, sausages, hash and other mixtures, that are fingered and fussed over and often kept for some hours before being eaten are apt to become infected with bacteria from human sources. That is why outbreaks are prone to occur after church socials, fraternity banquets and picnic luncheons. Canned goods are entirely free from danger of conveying the infections in question on account of the processing necessary to preserve the contents of the can in good condition. . . . So far as "ptomaine poisoning" is concerned we are now prepared to state that there is no such thing. Our chemists looked in vain for ptomaines, that is for poisonous decomposition products of protein putrefaction, and I think it is now generally accepted that there is no such thing as "ptomaine poisoning" as that term was once understood.

Dr. Roseneau challenged another "curious superstition," that the entire contents of a can should be emptied at once after opening. This, he de-

clared, is not true for food keeps just as well in the can as it does in a glass jar. Canned foods after opening should be kept clean, cold and covered, but that precaution applies as well to fresh food.

While it is true that the investigation was supported by a grant to Harvard University from the National Canners' Association, the eminence of the scientists who conducted it precludes thought of improper influence on their judgment. The conclusion that canned foods are the safest of all foods will go far to allay a disturbing fear in the minds of millions of consumers, a fear often causing the keenest mental anguish.

Dry-Powder Extinguishers.

Although dry-powder fire extinguishers are sold to a gullible public in increasing numbers, they are all, without exception, practically worthless. Tubes costing \$3 each contain materials having an average value of eleven cents. Chemical analysis of thirty-one tubes of various makes shows the contents to consist of approximately 60 per cent common baking soda, 26 per cent fine sand, 8 per cent pulverized chalk and 4 per cent colouring matter, chiefly iron oxide. The inefficiency of dry powder extinguishers was made the subject of searching investigation by a special committee appointed by the British Home Office in March, 1916. Their report contained the following statement: "The use of dry powder fire extinguishers is to be deprecated as not only giving a misleading sense of security but being practically useless for extinguishing or controlling fires."

Of an entirely different character are the small one-quart chemical extinguishers sold under different proprietary names but all containing carbon tetrachloride as the extinguishing fluid. These have the great advantage of being easily handled by women and children. When subjected to heat, carbon tetrachloride generates a heavy, non-inflammable gas that will extinguish fires under circumstances where water would be useless.—Grove Smith, in February "Conservation."

New Swedish Import Regulations.

Boots and shoes may only be imported into Sweden for sale if they comply with the following requirements (which are also applicable to boots and shoes manufactured in Sweden):—

(1) In the case of all boots and shoes, with the exception of slippers and small baby shoes, cardboard, artificial leather, or artificial leather cardboard, may only be used for filling at the bottom of the boot or shoe and of the instep, or for strengthening the insole under the heel, and also for a short stiffening of the toes in shoes without toe caps.

(2) In the case of dancing shoes, etc., artificial leather and cardboard may be used for the interior sole and heel, and in the manufacture of boots with cloth uppers for strengthening the whole insole.

Boots and shoes manufactured in Sweden must be stamped with the registered trade-mark or name of the manufacturer, in a conspicuous place under the outer sole or inside the upper, and with a steel stamp on the insole at the instep. Imported boots and shoes must be marked in this way by the importer, and must also be marked with the importers' trade-mark or name and the word "Import."

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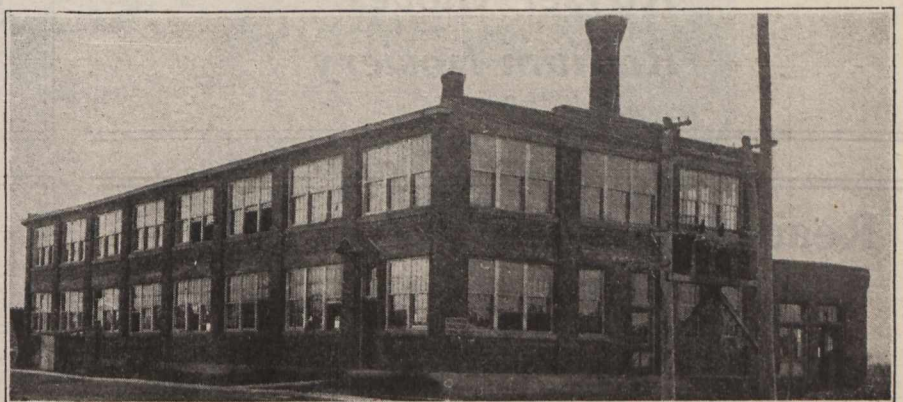
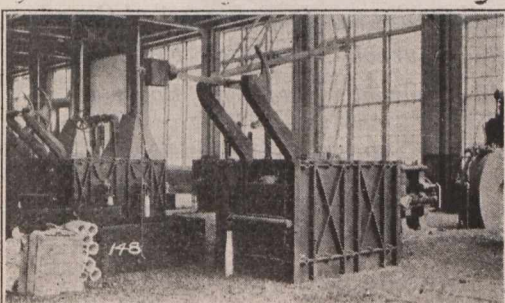
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