

The Rural School Luncheon

Nothing will so much hasten the time when the body and mind will both be adequately cared for as a diffusion of the belief that preservation of health through proper feeding is a duty. Few are conscious of a physical morality, but when this is seen, then will the physical care of the young receive all the attention it deserves.—SPENCER.

In the Province of Saskatchewan 58.1 per cent. of the school children attend the rural school and the greater number of these on account of living long distances from school, bring lunches which are eaten at the noon hour. In the majority of the schools the children have liberty to eat their lunch where and how they choose, and the way in which it is done is not conducive to health. In fine weather they may be seen eating their food while playing; or gulping it in order to get to their games quickly; it is not an uncommon sight to see a child with a sandwich in one hand and a stick in the other chasing a gopher. In inclement weather they huddle in groups about the steps or the stove, munching their food and discarding the crusts and other pieces which do not appeal to them.

Probably the lunch does not attract them. It is commonly carried without wrappings of any kind in a tin lard pail where it gets the taste of the tin; often it is wrapped in a newspaper and gets the added flavour of printers' ink. Some of the lunches are wrapped in cloth which is not always clean. Such conditions are not fair to the child. He comes a long way to school and does what is a heavy day's work for him, and it is necessary that he receive proper nourishment served in an attractive way.

We know that adequate nutrition is necessary for healthy growth and that the lack of it is the most productive cause of low vitality, which favours tuberculosis and certain other diseases, such as anæmia. In this province, in the year 1915, 15.4 per cent. of the total deaths of persons from 6 to 19 years of age was due to tuberculosis and 24.19 per cent. of the total deaths of persons from 20 to 29 years of age was due to the same scourge. To how many of these may we not trace as cause, the lack of proper nourishment and healthful habits in the earlier years of life. The pale anæmic faces of our school children in the spring time tell the tale of a winter with an insufficiency of the great factors necessary for health—fresh air, exercise and nutritious food. There is hardly a defect among school children which is not to a greater or less extent produced by a lack of proper nutrition. Because nutrition is of primary importance in all lines of child development, the school must consider it