

SOME LASTING BENEFITS OF CONTROL.

Below are extracts from an address on food control during war and peace, by Dr. Harry E. Barnard, an acknowledged authority on public health, before the 46th annual convention of the American Public Health Association.

Dr. Barnard stated that regulatory work "had been most successful. The control of the baker, miller, commission merchants, broker and large grocer has functioned through the development of a license system that denied the right to do business except to licensees, and provided for forfeitures of licenses in case of proven violations. This control, arbitrary and unprecedented, was feared at first. But it was very soon found to be a real stimulus to good business, and to-day, though regulations are being rescinded, the licensed industries are better business houses because they were compelled to adopt modern methods of accounting and stock recording, to sell products in uniform packages, to eliminate speculation and forego speculative profits.

"If food control, fairly administered, has checked the development of the food industry, no evidence to that fact is available. On the contrary the amazing progress of the canning industry, from the sardine packer in Maine, who reluctantly accepted inspection only to find in it his salvation, to the corn canner in the central states who had to be forced to pack true sweet corn instead of field corn sweetened with saccharin, most definitely attests the commercial value of food control. The meat packer who once fought federal supervision, now recognizes Uncle Sam's inspectors as his best advertising asset; the baker who worked behind closed doors, now proudly acclaims his plant as a palace of cleanliness and urges his patrons to inspect his white tiled walls, his spotless workrooms, and the health records of his medically-inspected employees.

"The regulations imposed in the interest of milk supplies of unquestioned purity have increased production costs, in some ways very materially. Better barns, sanitary milk houses, sterile packages, refrigeration, tuberculin-tested herds, all cost money but they increase milk values even more proportionally.

"If the food supply in the years to come is more abundant, more readily conveyed to market, cheaper because we have learned how to increase crops and reduce wastes, facilitate free movements by rail and motor truck, eliminate profiteering and gambling, the necessities of war may, in a very real way, become the blessings of the people."

In a circular to women's committees of the Council of National Defence in the United States the following suggestions are made:—

"The signing of the armistice has rendered more imperative the need for saving and producing food. At the same time that the need abroad is enormously increased, the difficulty of securing support for a conservation programme at home is greatly heightened because of a growing indifference on the part of the public now that actual fighting has ceased. Strong and unceasing effort will be required to bring to our people a sense of responsibility for feeding all those who are in want and a realization of the menace to peace and order which is presented by nations suffering from famine.

"In carrying on this work, it will be especially necessary for the food committees to act in close co-operation with the local Food Administrators, so that the changing demands of the Food Administration may be understood and presented clearly.

A systematic campaign should be undertaken to encourage thrift and to preserve the habits of economy which war has taught us. The home demonstration agents of the Department of Agriculture, while they will, of course, give their services to food conservation work so long as the present emergency continues, are prepared to an increasing extent to take the lead in movements to teach the conservation of clothing and other personal and household economies. The savings which may be effected by these means are vitally necessary for those of small incomes in the face of present high prices, and should be of importance to all because only through increased economy can we secure the means of paying the national war bill. Two more big loans have already been announced; we are told that we must buy two billion dollars' worth of savings stamps. This obligation should be met and can be met by small savings through the elimination of the wasteful extravagance for which the American people have long been famous. Local committees should be advised to take up the matter of a campaign for thrift with the home demonstration agents, and where there are no such agents steps should be taken to secure their appointment."

For the week ending November 30 there were 762 prosecutions in Great Britain and Ireland for offences against food laws.