

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

NUTRITION AND FOOD MANAGEMENT

I. International Survey by FAO of Existing Conditions

Statistics: The committee notes that "good national food management largely consists of political and administrative skill in applying scientific and statistical knowledge to the improvement of human nutrition and agriculture." Knowledge of consumption habits and nutritional status as well as statistics of cereals, meat stocks, prices, etc., are essential.

Hence the committee recommends:

That detailed studies of the techniques of measuring and comparing the food consumption and nutritional status of the western and less developed countries be undertaken by FAO and that particular attention be paid to the type of statistical materials required.

Immediate steps to meet urgent problems: Attention of the delegates at the conference is expected to be focused on immediate steps to meet the most urgent problem of malnutrition, especially in the less developed countries. The committee gives greatest urgency to measures affecting the vulnerable groups - i.e., those people who are most subject to physical stresses and strains and who are least able to obtain for themselves the right kind of food.

The group includes expert workers, nursing women, pre-school and school age children, adolescents, the very poor, workers in industrial countries and women labor in tropical and colonial territories. In general, the highest insurance institutions favor that special attention be paid to the health and nutrition of children and adolescents in order to prevent sickness and breakdown when they become workers. Methods used included summer vacations with abundant good food, fresh air, rest and outdoor activities. Britain during the war made provision for extra foods for this group.

In seven years the mortality of a group of native workers in the Belgian Congo fell from 85 to eight per 1,000 as a result of improvements in feeding and housing.

Measures taken by various countries include direct distribution of food supplies, food stamp plans, cash relief allowances, school and hospital feeding schemes, etc.

The committee recommends:

That FAO arrange for a detailed study of special food distribution systems for vulnerable groups and for a study of the relative value of cash allowances versus food-in-kind relief programs.

Methods of transporting and processing foodstuffs: Great progress has been made during wartime in the transport and preservation of foodstuffs. The use of a protein or protein powder, however, was "still in the early stages" and "what will it cost?"

Problems like these arise: "Can a cheaper winter oil be developed by using a dried product produced in the season of peak production? ... What are the economic and nutritional values of fresh green winter vegetables as compared with dried-herbs?"