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TENTH PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE

September 4-18, 1938

Bogotá, Colombia

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONES OF THE

COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION

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I

Nutrition cannot be regarded as a health problem alone any more than it can be regarded as an agricultural, economic or transportation problem alone. If an inexpensive, adequate diet is to be made available to the entire population, it is necessary to have national planning and cooperation between all of the agencies concerned with the food supply. Since the principal purpose of such planning is to secure a strong, well developed and healthy people, it should be guided by the department of public health. For this reason, the Committee recommends that each country should create a national nutrition committee, under the guidance of the health department, composed of representatives of all the agencies concerned with the cultivation, transportation, preservation, and utilization of food, for the purpose of adequate cooperative national planning for securing adequate nutrition at the lowest cost.

II

The Committee recommends that the departments of public health of the various countries create a special division for nutrition studies, or an institute of nutrition. Where an institute of nutrition already exists, collaboration and cooperation with the health department should be arranged to the fullest extent. It is the opinion of the Committee that an important part of the program of the institute of nutrition should be the analysis of native foods in order to determine their exact nutritive value, and a study of the desirability for the introduction

and cultivation of new foods which may be needed to economically supplement the native food supply, and to recommend proper combinations.

III

The Committee recommends that the various countries undertake studies to determine the prevalence of dietary deficiency diseases, together with a study of the dietary habits and nutritional status of various population groups, especially children and prospective mothers, in order to determine the most serious nutritional needs requiring immediate attention and to secure the necessary information for properly planning an adequate program of correction.

IV

The food selected by the family depends to a large extent on the price and on how well it is liked by the family. Unless foods are properly prepared, much of the nutritive value may be lost, and unless they are palatable and attractive the quantity eaten may be insufficient. For a nutrition program to succeed, then, it is necessary to teach the housewife how to select the proper foods to secure a well balanced diet and how to prepare these foods in the proper way. Educational programs are already under way in some countries. For example, in Uruguay.

The Committee therefore recommends that special attention be given to educational measures in nutrition. Such educational measures fall into several categories:

- (1) for the pregnant and lactating women
- (2) for mothers of older children
- (3) for school teachers
- (4) for school children
- (5) for college women
- (6) for the general population
- (7) for workers

V

Milk and its derivatives, as shown by experiment and experience, provided these products are obtained under the standard sanitary conditions which have been established, are highly favorable to public health, decreasing infant and general mortality. The Committee recommends that the countries of America take measures to increase the production and consumption of safe milk and its derivatives. These foods should be included among those of primary necessity. Where it is impossible to provide for public consumption a clean and safe milk supply, it is recommended that the milk be boiled.

VI

Bread is an important and valuable article of diet, and when supplemented by the proper foods it can be used very satisfactorily in making an adequate diet. This is especially important in the American countries where bread is such a large item in the diet. Highly milled white flour has lost much of the nutritive value of the wheat, and where the diet is restricted it is important that at least part of the bread should be made from lightly milled whole grain. Since the nutritive value of bread may be so greatly influenced by the ingredients used, the Committee recommends the enactment of regulations governing the composition of bread and the encouraging of the use of bread containing lightly milled flour.

VII

Numerous vitamin preparations, extracts and concentrates are now being widely sold for the prevention and treatment of dietary deficiency diseases. The Committee recommends that the various countries enact regulations governing the composition and potency of vitamin preparations being offered for sale.

It is the opinion of the Committee that the use of such preparations and concentrates should be restricted to special cases, and the proper method for preventing dietary deficiency diseases is by making the necessary corrections in the diet by the use of readily obtainable foodstuffs.

VIII

The activity displayed to date by the health departments or Public Health services of the countries of America, or by other national institutions, show a special interest of these bodies in this matter, from a preventive standpoint, as well as that of economic and social welfare. The activities sponsored by the previous Pan American Sanitary Conferences, with regard to human nutrition and alimentation, have already had very favorable results for the health of the American Republics, and greater efficiency may be expected with the continuation and intensification of the work already begun.

IX

In order to facilitate the dissemination of nutrition information between the various American countries; to enable each country to profit from the experience of others; to give such advice and assistance as may be requested, within the means of the Committee, and to cooperate efficiently on an equal basis with other international and national nutrition organizations, it is recommended that the Pan American Nutrition Committee be made permanent.

X

A vote of congratulations should be given the Governments of America, for the work done up until the present time, in nutrition and alimentation as public health problems, and another vote of encouragement to stimulate the continuation and extension of work of such immediate and future importance.