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FOOD CONSERVATION

By A. HEBARD CASE

Office of the County Agent at Kauai (Paper presented to the Waimea Literary Club.)

The slogan of the Food Administration which has been used since the beginning of this work and to which we will march to victory is, "Food will win the war—don't waste it." To stop wasting food is, of course, a cardinal point in food conservation. It is Conservation. But to insist on that strongly, as strongly as we are going to have to insist upon it before the necessity for it is driven home, and not offset by the counter-balancing fact that there is something which we can eat instead of that which we save, and the disagreeable impression is created in the minds of the people that they are being asked to half-ration themselves while we are carrying on this great war against Prussianism. This impression has already been created, to some extent. To correct this misconception, to tell the story of the part food plays in war; how bread and bullets will put down auto-eracy and make the world safe for democracy; how we must conserve our food supply in order that a share and an ungrudging share, may be spared for our allies, is, if not the most important, at least the immediate and first task of the Food Administration or any other such body. From this important task is brought to light a new slogan which will answer the needs of the Administration and create no such feeling or fear in the minds of the people, that—"Eat and win the War."

One of the first things to be done is to remove from the minds the fear that this country is entering a campaign of starvation. We are going to send great quantities of food abroad, in order that our allies may keep on fighting and win the war, for us as well as themselves. The more we send, the further we will keep the first line trenches from our shores. We will send food, then, send it abundantly, but that does not mean that the American people are going hungry. It does not mean that they are going to eat less than they have been accustomed to; they may in fact, eat more. The time may come, possibly should the war continue for years, when they will have to eat less, but for the present all they are asked to do is to use sparingly the foods that can be conveniently exported to our allies.

They are some things, perishable stuff and bulky foods, which can not so well be shipped abroad. They are wholesome foods of which the American people for their health's sake ought to eat more,—cornbread, rye, potatoes and home products of which all are good. So that, all we ask so people is to change their habits a little, to eat all they want of any number of foods wholesome and pleasing to the taste, but to cut down their consumption of certain things of which our allies stand in crying need,—we are actually counselling the people, when we ask them to save, to do something which is good for them.

Food conservation is not going to be a hardship to us, if we look at it in the right way. At most it will mean the substitution of one thing for another. The man who eats less wheat bread and more corn bread may find, as thousands have found, that they like corn bread better. Be willing to try new foods.

Conservation is not even going to mean that we are to be unduly limited in our choice of dishes. Think of a chart. On this side are the things of which we can eat more, on the other side those we ought to eat more sparingly. You will see that the 'eat more' out balances heavily the 'eat less.' On the Food Administration Home Card there are only six articles which Hoover has asked the housewife to save, viz: Save the wheat,

save the meat, save the milk, save the sugar, save the fuel, in addition the housewife is asked to buy home produce and use perishable foods in greater quantity.

Another impression that must be removed is the wrong idea some persons have that this whole movement is to cut down the grocery bills of the American people. As one woman was heard to say, "It's a lovely plan. We eat less and save our money so that we can send it to Europe." What the soldiers who are banging at the Germans want is Food, not money, and food is what we are going to send them.

Thrift will undoubtedly be a by-product of conservation—and therein will lie another benefit to us as a nation, but mischief will be worked if the impression becomes general that thrift is the ultimate object. That would leave unconsumed great quantities of foodstuffs which cannot be very well shipped abroad, and which, if we do not eat, will benefit no one. That in turn, would have a bad effect upon future production. What we want to do—what we must do—and what we will do—is to induce farmers to put forth every effort to produce, produce, produce. They must not be discouraged by foolish economy that would have the effect of over-production, and lead inevitably to inactivity or retrenchment on their part.

Furthermore the lesson must be driven home that the duty of conservation rests upon everyone. John must save as well as James. The banker as well as the laborer in the fields. The husband as well as the wife. The community as well as the entire nation. Women have been preached at about starving the garbage can until every woman must be weary of the very name of conservation. One would suppose that the whole duty of feeding the allies rested on their slender shoulders. One woman asked, what good it did for her to skip the dinner table when her husband burned up all she saved in his cigars. We will soon get after Mr. Husband. Every one in the family must co-operate with the housewife.

One more lesson the American people ought to learn—the purpose in establishing the Food Administration and Commission was not, primarily, to reduce the high

cost of living. It will, by throttling speculation and artificial shortages, undoubtedly tend in that direction; and for that, so much the better. But the great object of food conservation is to win the war. That fact ought to be drilled into our ears until we cannot possibly forget it or misunderstand it. Let me repeat that—the whole object of this movement is to win the war. Look at the matter in the light and you will see that price, important as it is, distressing as is high cost of living, especially to the poor, is of relatively little moment beside the necessity of winning this fight. We can put up with high prices for a while, if necessary, but we don't want to put up with the Prussians. And that is what we shall have to do unless we subdue them. To subdue them each patriotic American must do his part, either in the trenches or at home. Regard it as a privilege to participate in such a patriotic movement in your home. The nation's task is a serious one. It touches each of us, you and me. If we do not win this war, we must prepare ourselves for grave changes in our institutions and to lead a different life from that which we planned to live—from that which our forefathers died to give us the right to live. We shall indefinitely face the interference of the Prussian auto-eracy or bear permanently the intolerable burdens of militarism. To win this war, we must have men, money and food. Our soldiers in the field have always done their part, our farmers and housewives will do theirs.

We are at war with Germany because Germany took the initiative and first made war upon us, sank our ships, killed our citizen, and plotted against us while professing friendship. We were patient till the offenses became so flagrant and insults so intolerable that it was merely a question whether we would admit that we were no longer a free Nation or accept the challenge of the war-made hypocritical, and mediaeval Prussian militarists. There was one choice we would not make—we were incapable of making. We could not choose "the path of submission and suffer the most sacred rights of our Nation and our people to be ignored and violated." We are defending our rights as a Nation. We are resolved that

there shall be an end of brute force in international affairs. What Germany's victory would mean to the world is plain. There would be no right except might, no peace save at the price of humiliations too bitter to be borne. Small nations could not exist. There would be no sanctity of pledge. With the dominance of Prussian militarism, the Anglo-Saxon struggle for free institutions and liberty will have been in vain. It is to prevent this, to defend our rights, and to make possible an orderly and just peace in the world that we are at war." The nation calls on its citizens for high and noble service. On some it calls for service in the field; on others for service at home; on all it calls for financial aid and conservation of the food supplies of the country. Change Do Your Bit to Do Your Best.

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C. & C. S. Charts 4116, 4102, 4115. Light List, Pacific Coast, 1917, page 152, No. 814. Buoy List, 19th District, 1917, page 12.

By order of the Commissioner of Lighthouses.

A. F. AKLEDGE,
Inspector, 19th Lighthouse Dist.

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