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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT
Hh

Thursday, June 2, 1932.

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Subject: "Good Nutrition for Good Citizens." From an address by Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior, given in connection with Child Health Week.

Bulletin available: "Food for Children," Farmers' Bulletin 1674.

Let the pessimists say what they please, there are plenty of encouraging signs of the times in this country. One of them is that the leaders in our government are taking such an interest in the health of the Nation's children. That promises well for the future of our children and for the happiness of our country. Not long ago, Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior, gave an address in Washington in connection with Child Health Week. His subject was "Nutrition" and what he said is of so much interest to all of us that I want to repeat his remarks for you today. He said:

"Nutrition may seem like a dull subject, but I venture to suggest that the kitchen, pantry and dining room are the most interesting parts of the house to every growing boy and to a good many growing girls. Besides, what we eat has a good deal to do with what we are. The amount of bad cooking and poor food that is consumed in the United States in any given day is appalling. This is in spite of the fact that no nation in the world has a better quality of food available for use.

"By proper nutrition from the very day that the life of the new citizen begins, we can do more than in any other one way to decrease those who make up the burden of dependents and unfit which we must carry and increase those who can pack their share of the load. At any given time we have so many million children to bring up. What they eat is of real importance in their development. There is a close relationship between proper food and good citizenship and improper food and bad citizenship. All of you know how the children behave the day after Christmas or after a birthday when the diet rules have been relaxed. We know that food has much to do with the way we all behave. But even more important, we are discovering that it has a great deal to do with the way disease is resisted.

"Each child is dependent upon the environment in which he finds himself. He does not make those conditions. We do. We are in a most fortunate situation in these United States of ours. We live in a temperate zone. It is possible for us to have good homes without unusual difficulties. It is possible for us through modern transportation to have fresh vegetables and fruits available each day in the year. The railroads, the reclamation projects, the development of Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Arizona, California and other States as garden spots, have made it no longer necessary for us to depend upon the potato, the cabbage, the onion and the apple for fresh food. It is worth while to remember how

important the potato was when it first came in as a part of the world food. The potato, the cabbage and the lemon had much to do with our ability to navigate the wide seas and to build up our present interrelationship with the countries of the world. When the crew and passengers of a ship had fresh food, not only did they avoid scurvy but they were more resistant to other diseases. There is a relationship between fresh food and sunshine and physical and mental vigor. One must know how to get the right kind of food into a child, how to develop the right food habits and to change the program with normal growth.

"There are two ways in which we go wrong; one is due to inadequate pocket-books and the other is doing the wrong thing. We will have to admit that, speaking broadly, in the United States it is misfeeding rather than lack of food that raises nutritional problems. Careless preparation, combined with a poor choice and maintained for some time, is bound to be harmful to children even with the wide margins the body possesses of meeting changes.

"This is the age of the can opener. It seems easy to take care of children by following the directions of those who are advertising food products. It is also the age of fads. In this field of nutrition we act about as we do in the political field and in the field of medicine. We have a great deal of information spread about that is not so. There is a lot more information not quite untrue but not complete. At the same time, we go a good deal by appearances. The second and third grades of fruits and vegetables are hard to sell, but when they are fresh they are just as satisfactory from the standpoint of nutrition as the very first qualities. We are inclined to buy with our eyes and not with our brains. This makes it more expensive than it needs to be to take care of our children. Our misfeeding then is based upon lack of understanding as well as upon inadequate education. It is not difficult to provide our children with proper food at low cost if we know what to provide and are willing to assist in the preparation. Over-prepared articles are necessarily more expensive. Advertising is important but it is not very nutritious. We must learn to stick to the more simple foods in so far as children are concerned. Pastuerization has made our milk supply comparatively safe.

"My own impression is that we often make the mistake of trying to make the feeding of children a little too complicated, rather than to make it simple. Children require just the same things that you and I require, not exactly in the same proportions, but the same foods. Variety is not so important for children. Simplicity and quantity are needed.

"Even the person who is not inclined or unable to spend any great amount of time in the preparation of food except to warm it up, can take satisfactory care of the food of children if certain simple rules are understood. With canning, refrigeration and transportation, we have new sources of food open to the home in which the children can participate with very little effort.

"We have had a fine report on nutrition published by the White House Conference on Care and Protection of Children. It was prepared by experts. It is scientific and at the same time it is simple and easy to understand in its more important parts. The American mother needs help in this subject. We must remember that thousands of new American mothers are starting out with this problem of child care each day. A new baby is the most interesting thing in the world. The proper care of that baby becomes the most important subject in the new home. If the right information is available and used from the very first, the life of the child is comparatively secure. Childhood is important to the

Nation and nutrition is important in government. The properly nourished children of to-day will not develop as many diseases, will not have as many crippled joints, and will not be so likely to add to the handicapped group of the future. Properly nourished children will become better citizens when they grow up. They will better resist the disorders of civilization--those nervous instabilities of various types and the tendency to use narcotics, alcohol, morphine, and other similar noxious agents. Nervous susceptibility is increased if the nutrition is poor. In a sound, properly fed child or adult the nervous system wants food, not drugs. The test is: Does the child feel well and is it strong and happy?

"The thermometer of good nutrition in children is happiness, for healthy children are happy children. Those children that are not happy should be studied from the standpoint of nutrition, as well as from other points of view. Nutrition is the most basic of all of our human responsibilities. It is something that comes each day. While for each individual they may mean merely the problem of getting a certain number of calories, from the standpoint of our children the choice of those calories is of vital importance. If an army fights on its stomach, and our military leaders tell us that this was so during the last war, then certainly our children should have the greatest attention paid to their nutrition so that as they go into the battle of life they will have the best possible physical body constantly maintained at high efficiency by the most suitable kinds of food."

That finishes Secretary Wilbur's address on the important subject of nutrition.

Tomorrow, we'll talk about refreshments for a party for a June bride.

