

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Thursday, September 21, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "ACCOMPLISHMENTS UNDER THE NEW FOOD, DRUG, AND COSMETIC ACT." Information from the Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today our Washington reporter has some news from the Food and Drug Administration. You recall that the new food, drug, and cosmetic act went into effect a year ago last June. So we can now see what results have been obtained under the new law, during the past year.

Our correspondent writes:

"The first attention of the Food and Drug men was directed to products not previously subject to legal control, if they were believed capable of serious public injury. I'll tell you about those activities in a moment. Meantime I'd like to mention some of the regular work of the Administration continued from the year before.

"For example, 74 cases of food poisoning were investigated in 29 states. These were mostly caused by uncooked foods, or cold foods that spoil easily, or by under-processed home canned foods. There were the usual number of cases where the housewife mistook a poisonous ingredient like bug powder for baking powder or salt. More on this later. I hope you will constantly urge your listeners to be careful around the kitchen and pantry.

The inspectors and chemists of the Food and Drug Administration are always on the alert for adulterations in staple food products.

For example butter is extensively sampled to make certain that it is of standard quality. Canned salmon had a good year, and so did canned tuna. Inspections of crab meat still keep investigators busy, as do fresh and



frozen fish operations in New England and on the shores of Lake Michigan. Frozen rock-lobster tails imported from South Africa are interesting newcomers to the fish counter. They require supervision to insure freedom from decomposition. After Food and Drug inspectors detained about one-fourth of the 162 lots shipped here last year, the shippers cooperated better with our requirements.

"An increasing spirit of cooperation from producers, manufacturers, and distributors of food products is evident throughout the year. In 1938 there were many candy seizures due to bad retail storage conditions. This year the handling of candy is much improved. Shipment of low-grade peanuts has practically ceased. Less insect-infested flour is found this year because the milling industry is cooperating all along the line. Only six-tenths of one percent of imported cocoa beans were rejected this year in contrast to 30 percent last year. Only 10 percent of condimental seeds and of imported dates were unfit for entry.

"Now for some of the work under the new act. Within 3 weeks after approval of the act, interstate shipments of sight-destroying eyelash dyes were located, sampled and analyzed. Sixty-five seizures were made. The objective was to drive such products off the market. Other dangerous cosmetics seized and subjected to legal action during the year were skin bleaching creams containing mercury compounds, lipsticks containing cadmium and selenium, and a mole remover consisting of acetic and nitric acids. All these ingredients are poisonous.

"The new act now makes it possible to prevent the distribution of drugs which are dangerous when 'used as directed'. That is, to give you the exact wording, 'when used in the dosage, or with the frequency or duration prescribed, recommended, or suggested in the labeling thereof.'



"Many of the drugs proceeded against under this section of the new law were headache cures or pain relievers. They contained such potent drugs as cinchophen (sín-co-fen), aminopyrine (am-ééno-pyrin) barbitúric (bar-bi-turic) acid derivatives, and combinations of bromides and acetánilid (ace-tan-i-lid). There was one obesity treatment containing dried dessicated thyroid. Until the law went into effect, there was no protection for consumers who knew nothing about the effects of these drugs, even when their presence was declared on the label.

"There is another provision in the law which requires adequate directions for the use of certain dangerous drugs and appropriate warnings against misuse. Some drugs of great value to the experienced physician are dangerous in the hands of those unskilled in the uses of drugs. And there are also some types of drugs formerly used but now known to be unsafe even under medical supervision.

Dinitrophenol (die-nite-ro-fée-noal) is one of these. It used to be taken for slenderizing purposes. But it is so dangerous that the Food and Drug Administration cannot permit it to be sold at all, no matter what label warnings the package may carry.

"The new drug section of the act protects the public still further. It provides that 'no new drug shall be introduced in interstate commerce unless an application has been filed with the Secretary of Agriculture, establishing that it is safe for use'. In the past year, over 1200 applications covering new drugs or combinations of drugs were received. By the end of the year, most of these had been reviewed, and 683 had been made effective. Some of the others have been withdrawn, and others still await consideration.

"A few of the drugs submitted are distinctly new and possibly highly valuable. On these, very considerable deliberation is essential. The act thus places a serious responsibility on the Food and Drug Administration. In one instance, it was necessary to examine 2,000 case reports recording the experiences of about 100 doctors. After an application has been made effective, it is still necessary to supervise the output of the product for purity and uniform quality.

"Later on I shall tell you more about the new food definitions and standards, and coal-tar color certification for foods, cosmetics, and drugs."

So ends our Washington letter on what the new law is doing to protect the public from dangerous foods and drugs and cosmetics.

