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Consumer Consciousness

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Spotlight Over Washington

By Alberta Hoppe

Columnist's note: The Homemaker has sent me, a reporter, to the top of Washington Monument, from which point of vantage, I train my spotlight on the city below and country roundabout, picking out the bits of Washington news of special interest to Home Economists.

FIRST to catch the spotlight is a figure of national prominence and importance, a woman, dark of eyes and hair, and with vision and character written in her face. Grace Abbott, for 13 years the chief of the Children's Bureau, handed in her resignation and turned westward to teach at the University of Chicago, where her sister, Edith, is dean of the School of Social Service Administration.

In 1914, Miss Abbott published *Infant Care*, a veritable Bible for young mothers. For this and her work in reducing infant mortality, her name will be inscribed on the pages of history made by great women.

* * *

IN the Department of Agriculture, facts reveal that nearly \$2,000,000,000 of the nation's food supply is subject to spoilage by rancidity. Most of these are edible oils and oil-bearing products such as butter, lard, potato chips, peanut butter, nuts, coffee, dried milk, corn meal, whole wheat flour, certain breakfast foods, biscuits and crackers.

Mayne R. Coe, federal specialist, carrying on research work on wrappers, found that products packed in green wrappers kept free from rancidity much longer than when wrapped in other colors. Green also best preserves the aroma, freshness, color and flavor of certain fruit juices, sauerkraut juice and coffee.

* * *

The spotlight plays over the dinner tables of Washington's "five hundred" and reveals a new quirk in food fads. Rice, cooked in colored water to produce the proper tint, adds a new note in table appearance and provides a means of gaining that necessary touch.

Hand in hand with the work of home economics course; in purchasing comes the effort now being made in Washington to protect the untrained buyer of foodstuffs. So that scientific selection can be made, government specialists insist that a concise, truthful statement of grade be given to the consumer, that the labels should include such additional explanatory statements as style of pack, count of pieces, size of units, number of servings, and so on, appropriate for the product.

Dr. Hoyt Urges

Consumer Consciousness

By Barbara Apple

THIS whole business of giving bonuses for crop reduction is an extremely dangerous precedent," declares Miss Elizabeth Hoyt, professor of economics and home management.

"A much more intelligent way of helping the farmer, that favored by Wallace, is the reduction of tariff to encourage the opening up of foreign markets for our crops. If this could be done it would have a favorable reaction on both farm and home by giving farmers a market and reducing prices to consumers."

The new administration, Miss Hoyt believes has helped the farm more than the home, because it has given agriculture parity with industrial occupations at the expense of the home. This, however, may be a necessary step, provided the course of agriculture is guided intelligently in the future. To guide it conservatively and with the minimum of additional cost to the consumer is certainly the purpose of Henry Wallace. This is clearly seen in his article "A Chartered Course Toward Stable Prosperity," published in September 1934.

There are some specific things which the administration is doing for the home, she pointed out, especially the attention it is paying to housing. On our own campus we have a graduate assistant and a scholar working out problems of housing. Eleanor Parkhurst, who obtained her master's degree at Wellesley, is working on the housing policy, on which practically nothing has been done in the United States. Alison Comish, a graduate from Brigham Young University, is also studying housing problems. Dr. Margaret Reid, assistant professor of economics, is directing a housing project in Iowa.

"The government's present attempt to aid the home as a consuming organization," Miss Hoyt adds, "is, without doubt, one of the administration's weakest sides. Both the AAA and NRA have organizations within them which are

A basis for standardizing labels is being sought.

* * *

If household improvement is an indication of rising standards, we are headed upwards. During its investigations the Federal Housing Administration discovered that there has been a 50 per cent increase in home modernization repairs in 525 typical cities in the United States during September this year as compared to September of last year.

supposedly looking after consumers' interests, but their accomplishments have been disappointing although some members of these organizations have given very devoted service. The trouble seems to be that people as a whole, and the administration in particular, have not had a very clear idea as to what a consumer's problem is; nor have they seen that the whole ultimate test of their productive policies and their policies in the determination and payment of wages is to be found in what people get out of it through the use of the income secured."

THE consciousness of this is growing, but it still has a long way to go. Miss Hoyt believes that home economists now have the greatest opportunities they have ever had: Making a united stand for the importance in the interests of the consumer.

Under the NRA the various consumer groups are trying to create consumer consciousness and to make people aware of excessive prices and to work for better conditions for consumers.

Some of the first codes of the NRA set minimum prices without regard to quality. Now there is a tendency to insist that when minimum prices are established, minimum quality shall also be enforced. "This, however, is not likely to be secured," Miss Hoyt stated.

RUSSIAN TOUCH

Natasha twirls
In a flame-red gown
When dashing cossacks
Gallop into town.

Natasha stares
At a wine-filled glass.—
With empty hoof beats
The cossacks pass.

—Alice Wortman