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Nutrition for Defense

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Nutrition for Defense

Dorothy Ann Roost discusses the conclusions reached by Nutrition Conference for Defense

The National Nutrition Conference for Defense called by President Roosevelt emphasized the importance of improvement in nutrition standards. The recommendations formulated by the conference and approved by the President were:

1. Improvement of presently known chemical and biological procedures for estimating the amounts of the essential nutrients in foods and their physiological availability.

2. More refined techniques for the detection of nutritional deficiency states, especially in the subclinical degrees of intensity.

3. More precise knowledge of the optimum and minimum dietary requirements.

4. Nutritional needs as influenced by convalescence.

5. Clarification of definitions used concerning physical status.

6. Study of all factors affecting the nutritive value of foods and their preservation during the interval between production and consumption.

7. Study of methods of preparation of foods for consumption so as to avoid losses of nutrients.

8. Study of food habits and methods and effects of changing them.

Other topics considered at the conference included Economic Policy and Social Responsibility as related to Nutrition, Public Health and Medical Aspects, Nutrition for Workers in Defense Industries, Methods of Education in Nutrition, Community Planning for Nutrition and Nutrition Problems in Group Food Service.

Quoting Miss Harriet Elliott, assistant administrator in charge of the Consumer division, "National defense means total defense. As such, defense has two parts: first, military preparedness and aid to the Democracies and second, the strength of our own people."

"To defend our democracy we must strengthen it, not undermine it in the defense process. As we develop a program of total defense today we must face not only the present but the future, and must lay the foundations on which a strong America can be built when the emergency is past. The framework within which we build sound nutrition for strong defense today extends forward to the only future which can give meaning to our present effort—one in which health, security and opportunity are the birthright of all our people."

It is this principle—the fact that adequate nutrition is vitally linked with health, security and opportunity—that brought together these nine hundred outstanding leaders in the fields of medicine and public health, social work, nursing, home economics, nutrition, agriculture, labor and industry, government and community organization to seriously consider methods of achieving the goals of better nutrition.

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