

Victoria, November 3rd, 1917.

Reverend Sir,

At a recent meeting of the Victoria Committee on Food Production and Conservation it was decided to launch a vigorous campaign throughout the city of Victoria and the adjacent district for the purpose of arousing the people generally to a fuller realization of the great necessity for observing the strictest and most intelligent economy with reference to the use of food. To this end a house-to-house canvass has been planned for the morning of Tuesday, November 13th. A very simple and reasonable food service pledge has been prepared by direction of the Food Controller at Ottawa and is being adopted generally throughout the Dominion of Canada. A large and capable body of women representative of the various wards of the city are being organized and will visit the homes of the people throughout the entire city and district, commencing on Tuesday morning, the 13th instant. Each of the women will be assigned to a certain limited district and will have with her a supply of Food Service Pledge Cards, one of which will be submitted for the consideration of each household. These Food Service Pledge Cards when signed will be kept at the headquarters of the provincial committee as tangible determination to aid the Empire and her allies in winning the war by the strict and rational conservation of food supplies.

The committee in charge of this work in Victoria believes that all ministers of the gospel will give their hearty endorsement to this movement and that they can do much from the pulpit as well as amongst the people at their homes to strengthen their resolve to endure and spare for the sake of our

gallant men at the front. It is, therefore, the unanimous wish of the Victoria Committee on Food Production and Conservation that all ministers of the gospel in Victoria and vicinity request the hearty co-operation of their people in carrying out the difficult task which has been assigned to the ladies' committee in undertaking this house-to-house canvass on the morning of Tuesday, November 18th, and that they do all in their power to assist in making this movement towards food conservation a success.

A brief resume of the work accomplished throughout Canada under the guidance and direction of the Food Controller's office at Ottawa is enclosed for your information and to be used as you may see fit.

We bespeak for this important work in Victoria your cordial support and valued assistance.

Signed on behalf of the Victoria Committee,

Convener, Publicity Committee.

It has been suggested that if the various clergymen of the city would make special mention of the aims & purposes of the campaign to be inaugurated by the Victoria Committee in connection with the regular church services on Sunday Nov 18th it would help to prepare the way for more successful work by the ladies on the following Tuesday.

WHY SHOULD I SIGN THE FOOD SERVICE PLEDGE CARDS ?

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- (1) Because the saving of food in the final analysis is a personal matter and I need to realize daily that myself and my household have a definite and constant responsibility along this line.
- (2) Because my example and influence with my neighbors will be strengthened by thus taking a positive and public stand on this vitally important question, and because my coming out into the open in signing a food pledge card may make it easier for my sensitive and reluctant neighbor to do so.
- (3) Because of the great stimulus to action of overwhelming numbers of people all moving together and all moving towards the attaining of such an important object as the saving of food for the allies.
- (4) Because a real need exists for my doing all I possibly can to meet a grave national crisis. Unless we put into daily practice the Food Controller's urgent appeal to economize in the use of the essential army foods, - beef, bacon and wheat flour, we are warned that the civilian population of the allies will have to suffer and that within the year they will be all on three-quarter rations.
- (5) Because the food service pledge can readily be carried out by everyone without any serious domestic inconvenience or hardship and in many cases would result in positive benefit to the individual from the standpoint of health and efficiency.
- (6) The fact that I have for months or even years been practicing the strictest economy may be, and indeed is, greatly to my credit, but is no reason why I should not now declare myself

along with all my fellow-citizens in this important question. I dare not say that this pledge to economize, or to continue to economize, in the use of food is an unwarranted interference with my personal liberty - so long as I pay for what I eat - when I remember that 400,000 of my fellow countrymen have of their own free will placed their very lives at the unrestricted service of the Empire, and when I remember that the only liberty they ask or receive is the opportunity to fight and sacrifice everything in the defence of the Empire, the rights of humanity and the safety of myself and my household.

- (7) Because another's failings and inconsistencies can never justify me in dodging the real issue or stopping short of the fulfilment of my whole duty. The fact that those in authority have not yet seen fit to put into effect certain measures which we consider important in solving the food question is no justification for our refusing to do other than our whole duty in saving food in every possible way. We should act now along right lines and then proceed together to demand redress from such evils as are abroad in the land. Refusing to line up with our neighbors on this question can do no good and may do some harm.

Finally, we surely understand by this time that this war is not alone a trial of manly courage and military strength and prowess, - it is the testing of the full strength and resources of the nations engaged in it. An adequate food supply is the first essential in the conduct of war. The citizens of Canada have the greatest opportunity that has ever come to the people of such a young nation to do a great service in the interests of other great

nations, and in the cause of humanity itself. The British Food Controller (Lord Rhondda), speaking of the part Canada could and should play in helping to meet the great demand for food supplies overseas, said: "We look to the resources of Canada and to the indomitable energy of Canadians for an answer that will shatter Germany's threat of starvation. In normal times the Mother Country is dependent on your Dominion for a large part of its food supplies. War has increased that dependence to such an extent that it is now vital for the United Kingdom and the Allies in Europe to obtain from Canada foodstuffs in far larger quantities than under peace conditions. That must necessarily entail effort and far-reaching economy with their attendant sacrifices on the part of Canadians."

(Signed)

Victoria Publicity Committee on
Food Conservation.

REGULATIONS ON FOOD CONSERVATION AND SUBSTITUTION.

1. Conservation.

Conservation can be effected in two

general ways:-

- (1) Prohibitions and restrictions imposed by the Food Controller direct;
- (2) Voluntary action by the people generally.

(1) There is general complaint and criticism coming from all sides on account of what is termed "slackness" on the part of the Food Controller in the matter of explicit official direction and control. There seems to be a widespread demand for more stringent restrictions with reference to the following:- (1) Observance of meatless days, (2) use of wheat bread, (3) use of beef under the name of "veal", (4) number of courses and elaborate menus which still obtain in the great majority of public eating places. Most men in charge of these eating houses finish by saying, "I'm willing to do it if all the rest will but not until then." More stringent regulations governing all public eating places, including clubs, followed up by close inspection is greatly needed.

(2) Voluntary conservation by the masses of the people can be secured only by a judicious and thorough educational campaign. This, however, should be backed up by a general demand that people in their homes will at least observe all of the restrictions imposed by law upon the public eating houses. The campaign of education should be carried on more from the economic and scientific viewpoint than from the moral and patriotic. We will not succeed in gaining the sympathy and support of the great majority of the people when we wish to reach it we merely go on preaching the one-sided doctrine of "saving and substitution".

People must be shown how to get a well-balanced and nourishing diet in sufficient quantity and at the lowest possible cost, - and they must be shown by practical demonstration. No one will object to war menus being plain, even to the point of severity, but they must be convinced that these war menus are wholesome and capable of maintaining the optimum of physical efficiency, and finally they will consider the cost. The general criticism of the sample war menus submitted from the Office of the Food Controller is that they are too elaborate and in reality too extravagant. As soon as war menus become recognized as a necessity and not as a fad they will suffer drastic simplification.

2. Substitution.

If such cereals as corn, oats, rye, beans, buckwheat and their products can be secured at a lower relative cost than wheat flour the conservation of wheat is assured and the problem settled. I entirely disagree with the statement that "the increased use of substitutes for white flour depends upon personal missionary effort". If fish can be widely distributed throughout Canada in good condition and at a price not to exceed ten cents a pound in maritime provinces and twelve cents in the interior (as has been shown to be possible by experts on our committee), the saving of beef and bacon will be an easy matter. This can be done only by the strictest government control of inland and coast fisheries which, after all, belong to the people - there are no "producers" of fish in the usual sense of that term. By "control" here I mean government operation of the fisheries and canneries and of storage plants. Few people outside of those actually engaged in catching fish are acquainted with the various kinds of edible fish. Much educational work needs to be done here. If a sufficient number of demonstrators could be employed in each province and these demonstrators could

be supplied with samples of the best kinds of fish, which they would cook in the best way, there would soon be an almost unlimited demand for even those kinds that up until now are quite unknown to the great majority of housewives.

3. Labour.

There are thousands of aliens in Canada who have not been and cannot very well be drafted into the army. They enjoy the most favourable conditions for living in security and prosperity to be found anywhere in the world. They recognize as duty to the State which supports and protects them. They demand higher wages for ordinary farm work than most farmers feel able to pay. They contribute nothing, as a rule, to patriotic or philanthropic movements. They are making good money by taking the places of loyal men now enlisted and gone overseas.

If agricultural production and the production of fish is, as has frequently been stated, essential to the successful prosecution of the war, I can see no valid reason why labour cannot be conscripted for this purpose. A large number of men of Class A were declared exempt from military service for various reasons. Many of these men might be given the option of taking positions as farm labourers. Their work would be reported on periodically.

Another plan to supplement the above would be to call up all Class B men and utilize all who are capable as farm labourers in connection with that work.

The principle involved is simply that of conscripting labour for essential lines of national service. Shipbuilding may eventually be classed with agriculture as an essential national service.

4. Greater Production

The production of food on urban and suburban lots is capable of great development. In the development of this important enterprise the exclusively consuming class becomes in part a producing class. Food is in this way made available at first cost, - a small cash outlay for seed and initial cultivation followed up by the weekly investment of a few hours' spare time. At a low estimate a cash outlay of \$20. with from 60 to 80 hours' work will produce \$100. worth of food, as Mr. Jack, President of the National Emergency Food Garden Commission of the United States, puts it, "F.O.S. the kitchen door".

The success of vacant-lot gardening depends largely on the organization behind it and on the amount of direction and support given. In most cases it will succeed best under civic management because of the fact that certain expenditures are inevitable in connection with the publicity and instruction and of the work. Furthermore, it requires the direction of an experienced and responsible body of men, especially when large expenditures for seeds and cultivation are required. First of all, a vigorous publicity campaign, such as that instituted in connection with the Victory Loan, is necessary. Attractive posters and circulars prepared in quantity and distributed in cities throughout the Dominion, together with press articles and notices, would be the most effective way of arousing widespread interest in this new and much needed line of work. Following is an extract from a letter written by myself to the Mayor of Vancouver on this subject:-

"I believe most of the failures in vacant-plot gardening in our cities are due to one or more of the following causes: (1) lateness in getting started, (2) unwise selection of the land to be cultivated, (3) lack of knowledge on the part of the gardeners as to most suitable crops and how to manage them, (4) lack of thorough preparation of the soil before planting, (5) lack of proper care and cultivation after planting. I believe it is possible to meet all of these difficulties by starting immediately and the first essential is that you have in charge a strong committee of capable and energetic men. In the next place, this committee must be strongly supported with the necessary funds to provide suitable equipment for doing the work, such as plows, disc and drag harrows, etc. The work of preparing the land should be carefully supervised by a competent man or by several men, if necessary, and a small charge made for the preparation of each lot. Then, there is the question of seed and fertilizers. These should be secured in large quantity and supplied to the gardeners at first cost. There should be a small sub-committee to look after the financial arrangements. In cases where the applicant for a vacant plot is unable to pay the necessary expenses for seed, fertilizer and cultivation, in advance, an arrangement should be made whereby he would be permitted to defray these expenses later on."

"There are doubtless many men and women in your city and district who would gladly undertake this work under the conditions already stated if they only knew how to proceed. In other words, there is need of a preparatory course of special instruction for all prospective vacant-plot gardeners. Such a course of instruction can be arranged for during the coming month. It might take the form of a series "

"of afternoon and evening meetings running through say one week, to be followed up by monthly or semi-monthly meetings to be organized by the vacant-let gardeners themselves. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and the Dean of the College of Agriculture have promised to co-operate with city councils in carrying out suitable courses of instruction. Such preliminary courses of instruction should then be followed up by personal advice and supervision. This would require the services of a number of competent men for a few weeks during the planting season. This could be organized by wards possibly, but there may be some other better unit of organization which you will be in a position to suggest."

"In conclusion and by way of a summary of the above-mentioned points, I beg to make the following suggestions:-

- (1) That the campaign for increased production from gardens and vacant lots be organized immediately.
- (2) That the plan of organization include the holding of special evening classes for men and women of your city and district who will signify their intention of participating in the work of 1918 by attending them.
- (3) That the classes be established as soon as possible after the new year and be held as arranged for with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and the Dean of the College of Agriculture.
- (4) That this preparatory winter course be followed up by practical instruction and demonstration under the direction of the Department of Agriculture in co-operation with the College of Agriculture, and that, if possible, at least during the planting season a sufficient number of capable instructors be engaged to advise personally the vacant-let gardeners right on the ground.

(2) That a publicity campaign be inaugurated at once for the purpose of securing a large number of men and women to undertake vacant-lot production for the coming year.

(3) That the Civic Committee on Production take steps to secure as soon as possible an ample supply of garden seeds, including potatoes and beans especially, to meet a reasonably large demand, and that as before these be retained to vacant-lot gardeners at cost price.

(4) That this movement be conducted as a purely civic one and that all necessary expenses connected with these courses of instruction and personal supervision be met by the city. "

A good deal can be accomplished by boys and girls in our public and high schools in the production of garden vegetables, poultry and rabbits. This requires careful organization and the hearty co-operation of teachers and school boards. The amount of energy that half a million boys and girls attending our Canadian schools could bring to bear on this great project of food production is tremendous and only needs direction to be made successful.

5. Distribution of Seed.

Provincial departments of agriculture should look to this without delay and secure good seed in quantity as soon as possible. A general request ^{should be made} to farmers to make known to their respective provincial departments of agriculture (1) their requirements in the way of seed grain, potatoes, and field root seed for 1918, and (2) the quantity and variety of seed grain of acceptable quality for sale (samples might be demanded). Central distributing and collecting points for such farm seeds would be officially announced and an authorized agent of the Department in charge of each.

6. Each provincial Department of Agriculture might operate a central labour bureau for men and women workers desirous of engaging in farming and fruit-growing. When desirable the Department could arrange for a number of local bureaus or employment offices for agricultural help throughout the province, especially in the large cities. Women's organizations are already fairly numerous and these should be made use of in carrying on Food Conservation campaigns.
7. Ministerial associations, where such exist, should be asked to lend their help in arousing and instructing the people in food-conservation work. The appeal should be to the clergy of a certain district rather than of a certain denomination. Have the clergy adequately informed on the subject by organizing, where possible, short courses or summer conferences for their special benefit. Similar courses could be established for teachers and for volunteer workers and demonstrators in Food Conservation generally. In order to conserve the sugar supply something should be done and done immediately. The manufacture and sale of expensive sweets and confectionery which call for the use of sugar in large quantities should be greatly restricted. Chocolate bonbons at \$1. to \$1.50 per pound, such as are still displayed commonly in shop windows, seem strangely out of harmony with rigorous war conditions in all European countries.

(Signed) J. W. Gibson,

Provincial Organizer of
Food Conservation Comm

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