

PUBLIC HEALTH—NUTRITION

# Extension of Food Stamp Plan Raises Question of Food Dole

## Increase in Employment and Higher Wages Believed Insufficient to Relieve Undernourishment This Year

**E**XTENSION of the food stamp plan to all families in the United States with incomes of less than \$1000 a year was considered as a nutrition-for-defense measure at the National Nutrition Conference for Defense called by President Roosevelt for May 26, 27 and 28.

This proposal, although being considered as a defense measure now, raises the question of how nearly we are ready as a nation, to consider what might be called a permanent food "dole" for a considerable percentage of the population, in order to insure a minimum standard of nutrition for the entire nation, war or no war.

The number of people eligible for public aid has come down sharply with increased industrial activity because of the defense program. No exact estimates of this number are yet available from any federal government source, but Federal Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt has just stated that increase in employment and higher wages will not be enough to have any pronounced effect on widespread undernourishment in this country this year or next. Because of this, extension of the food stamp plan will be considered as a possible method of improving the health and fitness of the people who are needed to step-up production of airplanes, munitions and ships.

The food stamp plan at present, after two years of pushing ahead as fast as possible, is available to about one-half the families on relief. At the present rate, authorities in charge believe it will take another year or so to extend it to all relief families. The plan increases the family food purchasing ability by one-half. Those eligible can buy a \$16 orange stamp per month per person. These stamps can be used only for buying food. With each orange stamp, a free blue stamp is issued which is good for an additional \$8 per month per person for food from the current surplus foods.

With one exception, this plan has so far been made available only to families certified by local relief authorities as eligible for some sort of public aid, that

is, families whom the social workers have interviewed and continue to interview every three months.

Many people feel that the stamp plan should be extended to those families not on relief but whose income is no higher than that paid through relief agencies to the families on relief. Difficulty of administration is one thing which has held up any such extension of the food stamp plan.

The social worker in direct and frequent contact with the relief families knows when members of the family are employed and no longer eligible for relief. If the food stamp plan were extended to non-relief families there would be no way of knowing, without increasing administrative facilities and personnel, when more members of the family got jobs, or increased wages, and thus

PSYCHOLOGY-ANTHROPOLOGY

# Food Habits To Be Studied By Research Council Group

**T**HE business man who makes his breakfast of coffee and a sweet roll and the typist who lunches on a "slimming diet" of pineapple and dry white toast will receive the attention of a new committee of the National Research Council devoted to food habits in their relations to national defense.

Acting on the belief of nutritionists that the American dinner table is the first line of defense for democracy, scientists on the Food Habits Committee plan to find out why America's way of eating fails to match up with what modern knowledge of vitamins, calories and minerals has shown is the best diet for building health and morale for an all-out battle of nerves and steel.

Chairman of the committee is Msgr. John M. Cooper, of Catholic University, well-known anthropologist. Personnel of the committee includes, besides other students of man and his folk-ways, psy-

chologists schooled in a knowledge of how habits are formed and changed.

Plans for attack on this vital problem were discussed at a meeting of the committee on May 23 and 24. The Food Habits Committee is one of two committees formed by the National Research Council to cooperate with the National Nutrition program. The other committee, which deals with the health and agricultural aspects of the program, is the Committee on Food and Nutrition.

The first job facing the Food Habits Committee will probably be to find out by a public-opinion poll, or some other suitable method, the extent to which faulty diets are due to ignorance of modern nutrition, to food superstitions, to individual or group prejudices or to prohibitive prices or unavailability of necessary foods.

With a wealth of oranges and grape-

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