



# Perspective

## Increasing Nutritional Awareness

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**T**HE EXTENSION OF KNOWLEDGE that increases nutritional awareness is not an easy matter. The advocate of improved nutrition has a tough row to hoe unless he has time and the skill to sell his wares to those he can buttonhole on the street. The situation may be confused but certainly not hopeless.

We must accept the facts of life. We live a complicated existence that does not permit food practices of our grandfather's day. The population increase alone requires reliance on the protective insurance, uncertain at best, afforded by the use of insecticides. Furthermore we cannot hope to change suddenly, probably not in our generation, the poor eating habits of many of our citizens.

We must plot our course carefully, avoiding the hazards of excessive refining procedures, of unnecessary use of food substitutes, and of improperly selected dietaries. Fortunately, we need not be impressed too strongly by the querulous who would quarrel with every dietary modification. The hazards can be avoided because the sciences of food technology and of nutrition have kept pace with the problems. Our need is to recognize our position and to integrate the problems and the answers. Needless to say, the food industries have supported whole-heartedly measures that have brought integration and that have raised our nutritional standards to their present improved levels. We are, however, far from our nutritional

goal. A keener appreciation of nutritional fitness will help us reach that goal. Here we are faced with an astonishing situation; one in which a conservative, well-planned nutrition program lacks the public appeal afforded the dogmatic proclamations of almost any John Doe who finds a public platform. We are still in the era in which extremist points of view are considered progressive whereas the absence of the spectacular about a conservative, sound, necessarily middle-of-the-road program is thought of by too many as an indication of a lack of merit.

Possibly my concern in this regard is unjustified, but I believe that it would help nutrition programs a great deal if a way could be found to glamorize sane, scientific nutrition so that it can compete with the fringe concepts of the extremist. Possibly one cannot expect the public press to do this job because it does not determine public interest.

Education is the answer and education requires time. Fortunate indeed are we, as food consumers, that in the meantime we can be assured of a continuing supply of fine nutritious food as long as we season the efforts of private enterprise in the food industry with just the right amount (and no more) of regulatory supervision.

*(Excerpts from an address before the American Institute of Baking, July 6, 1954.)*