



Dietitians Plan For Future

Miss Nell C. Clausen, Dietitian, Milwaukee Children's Hospital, and President of the American Dietetic Association, expresses her vision of the future of dietetics in these excerpts of her report to the dietitians' meeting at the Tri-State Hospital Assembly meeting in Chicago.

THE future for the dietitian is what she chooses to make of it. Dietitians are now in a position to take part in the planning for the hospitals of the future and of other organizations of which they are a part.

Postwar plans include ample floor space for the department, completely above ground; more storage space for fresh fruits and vegetables; deep freezing units; fluorescent lighting; sound proofing; air conditioning; and adequate office space for the dietitian and her assistants.

New materials are being developed which will increase the sanitation of food service and improve flavor of foods. Plastic dishes and trays can be completely sterilized and do not impart flavor. Glass-lined coffee urns make better coffee. New precision instruments, automatic controls and more built-in equipment will appear in the dietary departments of the future.

Something must be done by our profession to remove the stigma from manual labor and recognize the co-ordination of head and hand. All members of the dietary department must be made to feel that they are contributing factors to the successful operation of the organization. They must be taught the importance of nutrition to effective living and be given credit for their efforts in supplying the essentials of good nutrition in acceptable form. Praise or compliments for the food service must be passed along to them.

Regular meetings with the dietitians at which cooks, waitresses and other employees present methods of food preparation, waste control or other projects in which they are interested, along with those presented by the dietitians, will help. Tours through the institution also create interest. Reports of weight gains or other improvements in the health of patients inspire the dietary employee with a feeling of importance.

Purchase of food will be simplified for the dietitian of the future, for the war has taught that the use of commercially prepared soup bases, concentrates, cake and pudding mixes, and salad dressings, is time, labor and money saving. When the right product is selected it will be of uniform flavor and quality.

The dietitian should plan for herself for the future shorter hours and straight shift; living quarters outside the hospital and a salary commensurate with that of other technically trained business and professional women. By her untiring devotion to professional du-

ties in the past, she has made herself indispensable to the hospital and is sought after by many other agencies operating group feeding units or interested in the dissemination of nutrition information. Through her professional organization she has built up standards for service and for training. Only through her own efforts can better working conditions and higher salaries for herself be brought about.

After the war many dietitians will be released from military duty. The market will not be flooded, for between now and that time the demand for more dietitians in hospitals or institutions that already employ a few, in institutions that have not yet employed them, in public health agencies, industrial plants, school lunchrooms, restaurants, trains, ships and airplanes, will be so great that those released will be absorbed. However, this demand was created by the efficient functioning of members of the profession, and only by continued increase in our efficiency will this demand keep up. The goal of food service "par excellence" has not yet been reached in all food service units operated by dietitians. Many people still believe there is no such thing as good hospital food—more especially *hot* hospital food. When more dietitians are employed, there will be more personal contact with patients and, after all, acceptance of your product is a selling proposition that can be done better by a member of the dietary staff.

I see for the future of the dietitian: increased appreciations of her services to the human race because of a better understanding of nutrition as a basic science; increased appreciation of her services by the organization in which she is employed and recognition of her as an important member of the staff; and increased participation by the dietitian in local, state and national affairs to the effect that good nutrition will be as strongly entrenched in the American life as the multiplication table.

I see the dietitian working in beautiful, streamlined kitchens, representing all types of food service. She is surrounded by clean, healthy, happy and well-trained employees. I see her in well-equipped research laboratories having sufficient funds to carry on long term nutrition investigations, and I also see her in every school lunchroom throughout the land.

Finally, I see the dietitian leave her place of employment after a satisfactory day's work, go to a comfortable home or apartment to relax and engage in whatever interest comes next in line to that of her profession.

At her desk the following morning she is refreshed mentally and physically and will make a more wholesome contribution for having been released at regular intervals from institutional environment.