



COLONIAL OFFICE

NUTRITION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES

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PREFACE

At the first Conference of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation recently held in Quebec, it was generally agreed that the member nations should make every effort to relieve hunger and malnutrition by directing supplies of food where they were most needed, by stimulating production and by ensuring that the best use, from the nutritional point of view, was made of the foodstuffs available. It was recognised that the methods followed during the war in the United Kingdom and other highly developed countries might not be applicable to the conditions found in less developed territories, where a different approach might have to be adopted. One method suggested was the selection of typical areas for experimental development, to serve as training grounds and working models for demonstration purposes.

The report presented here shows how the nature of a territory's nutritional problem may be determined by a simple and rapid clinical examination of suitable population groups, and the value of its food supplies in relation to human needs be assessed. It also shows that, in areas at the stage of development represented by the Caribbean territories, certain immediate measures for the improvement of nutrition can be recommended without hesitation (paras. 23-47), while other problems require the kind of attack outlined in the proposal for a Nutrition Working Party (paras. 60-73).

I take this opportunity to correct certain misinterpretations of my recommendations which have received some publicity, and which have arisen because material used for purposes of particular discussions during my tour has been considered out of its context. In particular, the basic diet, by means of which I demonstrated the merits of supplements which could be provided in various ways, has been called a recommended diet. It will be clear from para. 23 of this report that this misinterprets my intention, but it was not possible for me to present the complete picture until I had finished my tour and was able to examine all the evidence, setting out my recommendations in the context of a full report.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation of the helpfulness and interest I encountered everywhere, without which the data for this report could not have been assembled.

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ERRATA

Cover.—for “Councii” read “Council”.

Para. 5(b). Page 2.—in lines 1 and 4 for “biliary” read “liver”.

Para. 45. Page 9.—for “Including” read “Included”.

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