



WHAT STUDENTS EAT

"They Argue Food Reform, But Still Use More White Bread Than Brown"

with the calories and vitamins and plan the meals round them," said Miss Griffin. "So it's just as well that the average meal provides a sufficiency of both."

Miss Tira Griffin, a graduate in home science from Otago University, has just spend a strenuous term reorganising the cafeteria at one of our university colleges.

"What do you mean by an average meal?" I asked.

"The usual meat and vegetable course, with perhaps fruit to follow. Plenty of vegetables, and see that they're not overcooked. You can't go far wrong with that. In a job such as this you can't afford to be daringly experimental, and I've concentrated on turning on the type of meals that will be eaten. They certainly have been."

"And what sort of meals were provided before you took over?"

"Mostly meals of the snack type: eggs and fish sometimes, but usually things like meat pies and spaghetti on toast. Now we're providing a hot one-course meal in the middle of the day and a three-course at night, and judging from the support the cafeteria's getting it's the type of thing the students really need. Quite a number of them live in 'digs,' and left to themselves they're scarcely likely to feed themselves properly. And the University's too far from town for them to go down there easily."

Tea isn't a Problem

"How many do you usually cater for?"

"Well, the cafeteria holds 70. We usually cater for about 60 each meal time, and then there's morning and afternoon tea as well. Morning and afternoon tea aren't much of a problem. We get about twelve dozen cakes a day from the caterers, and two four-pound loaves of white and one of brown, all of which gets made into sandwiches."

"What about the tea itself? Isn't that a problem?"

"We seem to use surprisingly little—about two pounds a week—in spite of the fact that it's served with meals as well. But then of course there are coffee and cocoa, and many of the students drink milk."

"Would you say from your own experience that people are getting more foodconscious than they used to be?"

"No, I don't think they are. You'd expect students at any rate to be in the vanguard of any reform. But whatever they may feel about food reform intellectually they continue to eat the same things. They still eat more white sandwiches than brown. Actually they're very conservative in the matter of food, and whenever I put on some new kind of sandwich they shun it, at least till all the tomato or egg or ham ones have gone.

"Catering must be getting a great deal more difficult now that so many things are hard to obtain."



MISS TIRA GRIFFIN
Manages a University Cafeteria

"Yes, tinned fruit, for example. I can see that soon we'll have to be relying on apples and custard for dessert, and it may be quite a good thing from the patriotic point of view. But eggs are at present my chief difficulty. Usually I lay down a supply of eggs while they're cheap, but I didn't start this job till March, and they seemed to be too dear then to preserve on a large scale. Now, however, I can't get nearly enough eggs (normally we use ten dozen a week) and so I'm afraid I'll have to exclude eggs from the luncheon menu for a while."

"And what about sugar?"

"I imagine I'll get some kind of allowance. And I've solved the problem for the time being merely by removing the bowls of sugar from the table and having one on the bench so that people can sugar their tea as they get it. And I find that instead of filling seven bowls once a day I need fill the bench one only twice a day."

"Brawn Rather Than Brain"

"I suppose it's necessary to plan all the meals ahead?"

"Yes, I do all the planning for the whole of the next week on the Friday, and order all my stuff. At first I found the ordering by far the most difficult part, because I had no idea how much of everything to get, but now I've worked out a satisfactory scheme. Actually you don't need a great deal of theoretical knowledge to run a cafeteria—it requires brawn rather than brain, especially when it's so difficult to get labour. I do most of the cooking myself as well as the ordering and general supervising."

"And I suppose the hours are fairly long?"

"Usually from 9.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., and there isn't much time for sitting down. But I enjoy it. I think I rather like having a job like this where there's a certain amount of responsibility. And another thing — students have good appetites and it's encouraging to see the food disappearing."

—М.I.