

FOOD DEFICIENCIES

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL, Nutritionist to the Department of Health)

EVERYBODY is now aware that gross lack of certain food constituents will lead respectively to nightblindness, beri-beri, pellagra, scurvy and rickets. These are deficiency diseases in their most obvious forms, not often seen in New Zealand. That does not necessarily mean, however, that we are not suffering from food deficiency states—"hidden hungers" as they have been described, to distinguish them from the obvious hungers resulting from too little food.

Whereas it takes a long period of deficiency to produce the frank illnesses exemplified in the above list of diseases, deficiency states which are less in degree but yet keep people from feeling really well are now becoming recognised by physicians as "sub-clinical" deficiency states—they do not necessarily require a visit from a doctor.

Wounds Which Won't Heal

Let me illustrate from the observation made by an American doctor who has been doing research work in England. He remarked on the number of little bandages on the people on the streets. "The people are lacking in vitamins in their blood, and whenever they scratch themselves, the scratches do not heal rapidly. Whereas a normal person's hand if scratched will heal in a few days, in these people it takes a couple of weeks." Vitamin C is necessary for the rapid and firm healing of wounds.

Sub-clinical vitamin B deficiency manifests itself in impaired emotional stability and impaired mental and physical efficiency. The Americans have labelled this as the "morale" vitamin.

Fatigue may occur as quite an early symptom either in Vitamin B or in Vitamin C deficiency. No one will doubt the practical importance of these factors in wartime.

Unnecessary Ills

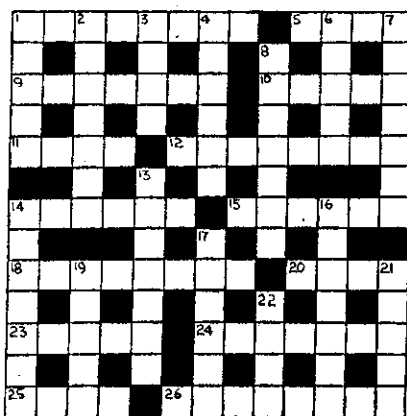
Further, to quote from Dr. Helen Mitchell, of the Office of Defence Health and Welfare Services, Washington, "We see more clearly the need for certain food essential to prevent or lessen the vague and ill-defined aches and pains and digestive disturbances which we have been prone to accept as inevitable. So many of the little discomforts of middle age and the so-called early signs of senility are not necessary. One needs only to read the medical journals of the last few years to be aware of the striking results of vitamin therapy. Such cases would not have responded to vitamin therapy unless the subjects had been needing vitamins. These reports merely serve to emphasise the real cause of long-standing deficiencies in which impairment to health becomes severe enough to come to the attention of a physician"

There is no excuse for sub-optimal nutrition in New Zealand. The difficulties are partly a matter of quantity and cost of the foodstuffs (production and distribution are involved in this), partly a matter of knowledge of food values, and of how to retain them in food preparation. Surely these are not insuperable difficulties.

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

(No. 100)

(Constructed by R.W.C.)



Clues Across

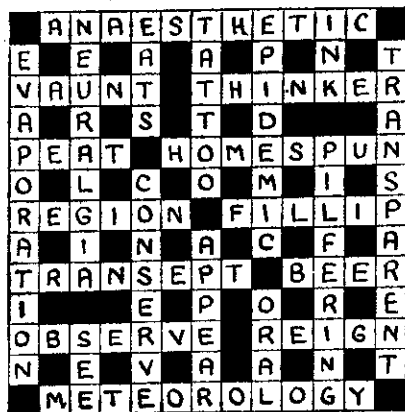
- The same gain may be found in this medicinal substance.
- Blue limestone rich in fossils—the reverse is found at sea.
- Therein (anag.).
- This sphere of action is a near thing.
- If you tamper with a kris, you naturally run this.
- A Christmas hymn about one of our allies results in a revel.
- Now hay is haphazard.
- Fed and ate in frustration.
- Gap formed by pure tear.
- Catch sight of.
- Ned and me in a German warship.

- Eels can be unequal sided.
- A dry measure?
- Treated as non-existent.

Clues Down

- Roman residence?
- A saying which can be made to contradict.
- Resound.
- With a rod Ian makes a hostile incursion.
- Times have changed here.
- This vegetable is all tosh.
- One brat (anag.).
- Rue it! No! It's all a matter of order.
- Day came to a place of study.
- Earnest (anag.).
- Form of poster used by conjurors.
- With deer I display a kind of duck.
- Output.
- Draw upside down in a hospital.

(Answer to No. 99)



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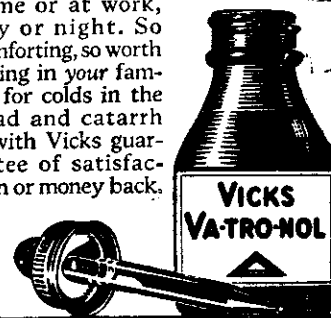
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