

SCIENCE

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A NATIONAL LABORATORY OF HUMAN NUTRITION¹

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THE Inter-Allied Scientific Food Commission, which held meetings during the spring and early summer of 1918 in Paris, Rome and London, decided to recommend to the four governments represented, those of France, Italy, England and the United States, that a laboratory for the study of human nutrition be established in each of those countries. The commission called attention to the fact that at least one quarter of the income of a nation is devoted to the purchase of food by its individual citizens and that, since the poorer the individual the greater is the proportion of his wage devoted to the purchase of food, it is therefore a matter of the highest importance for the welfare and prosperity of a country that the methods of the best possible utilization of its food resources for the benefit of its citizens be sought out and in time definitely established by reliable scientific data.

The comforts which one enjoys in the modern world are derived from the advance of science. Though the so-called "practical man" says he will accept no "theories," yet in reality he never acts except upon some theory of his own. The difference in the value of the opinions of the "practical man" and the "scientific man" is that the theories of the latter are more likely to be correct than those of the former.

If one looks back into history one notes the influence which an American-born scientist, Count Rumford, had upon the fortunes of Bavaria. Among the 60,000 inhabitants residing in Munich there were so many beggars and vagabonds, who were all potential thieves, that in the year 1790 Rumford authorized the seizure of 2,600 in one week and put them to

¹ A paper prepared in London in June, 1918, at the request of Professor Langlois for publication in France.

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