White bread eaters to exchange
ONE POISON FOR ANOTHER
Nitrogen trichloride used to bleach National and white flours, is to be replaced this year by another bleaching agent

A glance at the technical literature will suggest other possibilities. In the 1948 edition of Lockwood's *Flour Milling* we find:

"Chlorine dioxide (Addage process) — The use of chlorine dioxide is a fairly new departure in flour treatment. Chlorine dioxide is more powerful than nitrogen trichloride; the quantities used are one-third to half those of nitrogen trichloride. Chlorine dioxide not only oxidises the flour pigment but also has a valuable bleaching effect on the colouring matter of bran, which makes it particularly valuable for bleaching very low grade flours."

So it would appear that white flour millers have another reason to welcome the new chemical, which they could not get without an allocation of dollars. It is possible that the delay in publication of the Addage committee's findings was due to the millers' nightmare of being left without a bleacher? Could it be that there were hurried consultations with the Treasury and an 'understanding' about dollars, before the millers accepted the recommendation?

**The Consumer's Interests**

In these days of pressure groups of various kinds, the legitimate interests of the ordinary consumer tend to be lost sight of. He is bombarded from personal experience, from propaganda and not given much propaganda and not given much publicised) acceptance, of chlorine dioxide not only oxidises the flour pigment but also has a valuable bleaching effect on the colouring matter of bran, which makes it particularly valuable for bleaching very low grade flours."

"Important advances in knowledge have taken place since this discovery was originally made (See British Medical Journal, 14/12/46). The poisonous agent has been found. When the protein of agene is digested it is broken up, and the poisonous agent was found in one of these products of digestion. "

"Although there is no evidence as yet that agenised flour is poisonous to dogs and said:

"The Test of the Ordinary Consumer"

The observers of January 29th, 1950, ended their *Observer* comment on the matter with these words: "The time is ripe for a medical inquiry into the whole subject.""
either as artificial colouring agents, anti-staleing agents, or shorteners. These are put in to give those properties which were formerly obtained in days of greater abundance by the addition of butter and other fats. Many of these substances may be harmful—we simply do not know—and it is high time that the public, who are the consumers, should be better protected. There is no excuse for the addition of possible harmful agents, even if these additions make the food more pleasant and palatable.

"The discovery of the toxicity of the Agene process ought also to make the public more vigilant of this wider problem of food adulteration by chemicals. It must, however, be remembered that certain chemicals are added to food, not for its aesthetic improvement, but in order to benefit nutrition. Thus, the addition of calcium carbonate to flour, of vitamins A and D to margarine, and of potassium iodide to common salt are essential steps in the improvement of the general health and physique of the population.

"Finally, I should suggest that some enterprising millers and bakers should place on the market and should thoroughly inform the public of a flour of the type at present in use, which has received no chemical treatment. They would probably be surprised at the great demand that might well be made by the ordinary consumer for this more natural and safer product."

The last prediction has, as we all know, proved to be quite correct and wholewheat bread is now available in almost every town and most good restaurants and cafes (though it is regretted that much of it is still only "brown" reconstituted bread).

The Whole Food Society advocates unadulterated food fresh from fertile soil, making a complete diet which renders unnecessary all forms of interference, including "fortification," and all partialization processes, including even part-extraction of flour, which it believes are harmful in some degree often in ways we do not yet understand.

Reprinted from
The Farmer (Spring 1955)

by
LEE FOUNDATION FOR NUTRITIONAL RESEARCH
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

REPRINT NO. 78

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