

PRESS DEPARTMENT  
Rose Young, Chairman

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NEWS SERVICE

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WOMEN AND WASTE DISCUSSED BY MRS. HENRY WADE ROGERS.

A champion has arisen in defense of the American housewife, at present the focal point of a good deal of attention. Mrs. Henry Wade Rogers, treasurer of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and chairman of Suffrage Agriculture, has taken up the gauntlet and flung it back in the teeth of detractors of feminine thrift.

"It has become the popular thing," protests Mrs. Rogers, who approaches the food problem from the standpoint of a successful farmer as well as that of a practical housekeeper, "to scold women and threaten them with the bogey of possible starvation unless they put their families on a bread-and-water diet. From a dutiful, inoffensive soul striving to stretch last year's income over this year's inflated cost of living the housekeeper, that hapless victim of masculine condemnation, has been dragged from behind the shelter of the cook stove and thrust into the limelight as a reckless spendthrift who wastes as she goes.

"Masculine psychology is getting all out of joint on the subject of waste. There are other avenues of waste beside the home, yet all the hue-and-cry continues along one line. Of course there is need for economy. This is no news to women. They have been struggling with the food problem ever since the war started but they have been unable to get any action on it because they are without powers of legislation. In the matter of economy the government might possibly learn from the housewife. Some recently-let government contracts show a lack of knowledge of market conditions that would shame an amateur home maker.

"It has been pointed out that in the United States only twenty per cent of the food crop ultimately reaches the kitchen. By far the greater amount is diverted to other uses, wastes in gardens and orchards, or is lost through speculation and inequitable distribution. Even if women saved every potato peeling and utilized every left-over this addition would not have any fundamental effect on the food situation. Whereas, by a far-reaching investigation into the ways of the food manipulator and a reorganization of food-distribution



methods a vast saving could be accomplished. At the present moment, strawberry growers are plowing under their crops because they cannot afford to pick them for what they will bring in the market. Yet the consumer is paying more for berries than ever before. The same is true of peas and other vegetables. Attention should also be directed to scores of cars of potatoes that are lying on side tracks to maintain market prices. The grower is receiving only a moderate price but the consumer is charged 7 or 8 cents a pound.

"Why are these matters permitted to retain their seven veils of mystery while pitiless publicity floods woman's domain?

"It is time that women gave thought to the larger aspects of the food problem. When they have listened dutifully to government experts in home economics they may be in a position to turn teacher and show the nation how to keep house on a large scale.

"Do you know there is more waste on the average farm than in a score of kitchens? Every year thousands of barrels of apples, baskets of peaches, pears, small fruits and quantities of garden truck are wasted because no markets are found and no adequate measures of conservation provided in time to take care of nature's excess production.

"This year, with millions of new gardens all over the country, every effort should be made to take care of surplus production that not an ounce of food shall be wasted. It is most important that the large leaks receive attention first. Afterward we can attend to the delinquent in the kitchen.

"The National American Woman Suffrage Association is urging upon the army of suffragists, who responded early to the call for home gardens, to turn their attention to community canning centers and to have everything in readiness as soon as possible. Dehydrating machines and other processes for drying fruit and vegetables are recommended and committees are investigating these machines with a view to purchasing and operating them on the community plan. In Germany in 1916 sufficient food was canned and dried to feed 40,000,000 people for six months and it is upon this wise plan of conservation that the Germans are subsisting now.

"It is impossible to reduce a people accustomed to an abundant and varied diet to a bean-eating population over night.



Hence too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the need for increased production. Let us harp on that string for a while. It is a hopeful sign that from the large number of women who have turned their attention to agriculture, come such favorable reports. Women are highly successful in almost all lines of farming. In growing small fruits and berries, in orchard work and in the care of stock, dairy and poultry they excel. Through war agriculture women are coming to have a new respect for the skill and energy required to cultivate the soil. And when a woman finds from actual experience what it costs in time and labor to grow a fine, red tomato or a respectable potato she can be depended upon to see that the results of her toil are not wasted.

"It is high time that thousands of women should lead the way back to country life. It is lamentably true that men have been deterred from having a country or village home because of the opposition of their wives to country life. Thus thousands of children, who should be born and brought up in the country, are deprived of that privilege.

"In urging women to take up agriculture instead of over-stressing economy, the government will open new avenues of development. New and healthful energies will be released that will have a valuable psychological reaction. In production there is a joy that cannot be found in economizing. It expands the mind as economy contracts it and promotes generosity as economy does selfishness.

"Our women stand ready to do their part as heroically as the women of other nations but they weary of hearing about their sins. They have economized now until they have cramped their souls and narrowed their viewpoint. Frugality is all right but it can lead to parsimony. The leakage from a hole in a sack of flour should be traced all along the route not merely across the kitchen floor."