

ACTIVITIES OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY ON A NATIONAL SCALE¹

PAUL V. SHANK

The Tiffin Dining Room, Denver Colorado

The officers and the members of this Association are to be congratulated on this meeting. Those present here today show their interest in a mutual understanding and unity of thought for sound progressive evaluation of the problems pertaining to the achievement of sanitation and good wholesome food in public establishments. Food service operators believe that they have much more in common than they have in competition with each other. Milk and food sanitarians, too, have many common problems.

The restaurant industry is composed of more than 500,000 small, independent operators spread out all over America. This industry prepares and serves one-fourth of all the food consumed in America. It is big business; in fact, America's fourth largest industry. This is important—important to milk and food sanitarians as guardians of the public health and doubly important to those who operate the industry, because theirs is also a tremendous responsibility.

Most, but not all, restaurant people understand this. They are interested in the problem and they, too, are to be complimented for the actual time and effort they put forth cooperating with public health people towards the accomplishment of satisfactory industry standards.

"Good food for good health" is the finest slogan ever projected for the food service industry, and if good food is important, sanitation is doubly important because sanitation is reflected on every plate of food that is served.

The restaurant industry has the highest mortality rate of any industry in America. In the opinion of many, poor sanitation is a greater contributing factor than poor food. The National Sanitation Foundation hits the nail on the head when it states, "Sanitation used to mean a way of surviving—today it means a way of thriving."

Before going farther, a word of approbation would seem in order concerning the splendid job of cooperation in inspection and food protection that we, of the restaurant industry here in Colorado, have received from sanitation people in the past decade.

It is just about ten years now since Mayor Quigg Newton brought to a tired, dirty and war-weary Denver a wonderful sanitarian by the name of Lewis Dod-



Mr. Paul V. Shank has worked in just about every job possible in a food establishment. About ten years ago he "graduated" from a cooking job to the ranks of restaurant operators—when he took over an old mansion that is famed from coast to coast today as the Tiffin, one of Denver's finest restaurants.

Active in civic affairs and an untiring worker both on local and national levels, Mr. Shank has served in most of the offices and on a great many committees of the Colorado-Wyoming Restaurant Association. He was president of this association from 1949 to 1951. He is also a director of the Denver Convention and Visitors Bureau and three years ago he was elected a director of the National Restaurant Association.

son. Mr. Dodson came here with a somewhat new approach to the problem—a theory that true sanitation can only be achieved by those who understand the problem and thereby become sanitation conscious. In other words, the educational approach.

First, the owners went to school—listened—learned—and, to their surprise, enjoyed it. Then came numerous classes for the employees. And the owners watched with amazement while their employees, too, listened and learned and enjoyed it.

Ten years ago, Denver's Public Health rating was among the Nation's lowest. Mr. Dodson has long since moved on to other fields, but his approach lives on. His successors have followed more or less the same pattern of thinking, with the result that Denver's Public Health rating today is a very commendable 80 per cent.

¹Presented at the Annual Meeting of the ROCKY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION OF MILK AND FOOD SANITARIANS, December 14, 1955 at Denver, Colorado.

The restaurant industry is particularly partial to the educational approach. Not all operators can afford all of the equipment and facilities that health officials would like to see in their places, and while all these things are certainly much to be desired, it is felt by industry that the greatest factor in sanitation is well trained, well directed, sanitation conscious personnel.

Undoubtedly everyone knows that sometimes operators with elaborate facilities do an unsatisfactory job, while others with little to do with achieve a very satisfactory rating.

Now a little background information is in order on the National Restaurant Association which is recognized as one of America's greatest and finest managed trade associations. Its more than 7,000 members represent a large percentage of the \$16 billion annual volume our industry grosses. In addition, it is affiliated with almost every state and local restaurant association in the nation, making it truly representative of the industry.

The National Restaurant Association is governed by a board of 42 directors—progressive operators, men and women from all over America. Every type of operation is represented and area representation is determined by population. To qualify for membership on the board, a person must first establish a reputation for leadership in his own community, must participate actively in local civic affairs, and must be a top-flight operator with a reputation above reproach.

President this year is Mr. Marion Isbell, owner of three outstanding operations in Chicago. To become president of the NRA, the person must be in a position to travel for a full year in the interest of a better food service industry.

Headquarters of the NRA are centrally located in the Willoughby Building at 8 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Executive Vice President and guiding light for the past twenty years is Frank J. Wiffler, the man whose genius for organization and leadership is largely responsible for the nationwide position of high esteem the NRA enjoys today.

Foremost in its activities is the great national convention held annually in the month of May at Navy Pier in Chicago. This show is the largest of its kind in America. Registration at last year's show was more than 31,000 people. There were more than 900 exhibits by purveyors to the industry, representing over four miles of new ideas and visual demonstrations.

Sanitation people who are interested in new equipment and better tools are cordially invited to visit the show. Admission to sanitarians is free. The show is both interesting and educational and is five years ahead of the parade.

The staff at NRA headquarters is divided into five departments: public relations, educational, research, legal and membership.

The department of public relations is headed by Mr. Ralph J. Peterson. Of interest is the fact that his department has established a large library of films, some of them valuable training films, which are available for the asking. Another outstanding recent achievement of this department is the establishment of a large fund for the advancement of a vast program of cooperative industry advertising and trade promotion.

Outstanding national purveyors to the industry were recently approached with the idea that a campaign encouraging more people to dine out would be to their interest. The idea was enthusiastically accepted, with the result that it is conservatively estimated that in 1956 more than \$5 million will be spent by these people in the interest of trade promotion for the food service industry.

Among participants to date are General Foods, Kraft Foods, H. J. Heinz Company, International Silver, Standard Brands, Borden Company, the American Gas Association, the Coffee Brewing Institute and the National Tea Council.

By now, everyone is probably familiar with the "Greatest Guy in the World" series appearing in the Saturday Evening Post. The "Greatest Guy in the World" has a halo over his head. He takes his whole family out to dine! This campaign is sponsored wholly by General Foods and is just one example of the things that are being done today for our industry.

Of interest too is the outstanding work of Miss Kathryn Bruce, head of the Educational Department.

Among the recent achievements of this department are a series of down-to-earth stories about the adventures of a fellow by the name of Mr. Biggers. Mr. Biggers has been in the restaurant business for a long time—perhaps too long. He is getting old and tired and he has lost his enthusiasm. To cap it all, he is in serious trouble with the health department. Happily, Mr. Biggers has courage to recognize the situation and as the story continues, he is improving. It's a great series and anyone interested is invited to write to Miss Bruce for the complete set.

The Educational Department is also responsible for a Careers for Youth program beamed at the high school and college level. This is a vigorous campaign to inform the youth of our nation of the potentials and desirability of entering into a career with our industry. This is one phase of the program which has been badly neglected. The results so far are gratifying.

The Department of Education supplies the outline and instructors for a short course on modern restaur-

ant problems, a comprehensive three-day seminar which is being featured annually at many leading universities. Preliminary plans are being made to hold this course at Denver University in 1956.

The NRA's Department of Food and Equipment Research is headed by the inimitable Colonel Paul P. Logan. Colonel Logan's career includes a lifetime of work on food and equipment research for the US Army. For the past ten years, he has devoted full time to our problems. A new research center for his department is now under construction at Michigan State at East Lansing. Colonel Logan is credited with having more technical information on the subject of food and equipment research at his fingertips than any other man in America.

Chairman of the Research Committee is Mr. Joseph Schensul of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Briefly, here are a few of the current projects under study by that committee: Development of an automatic tea brewer which dispenses hot tea from one faucet and iced tea from another; intensive research on the new radar range; development of an acceptable thermostatic control for our industry; standardization of sizes of cooking utensils; food testing and many other things.

The Legal Department is headed by Mr. Armin Kusswurm. Mr. Kusswurm, incidentally, also is secretary of the NRA. His full time is spent exclusively on industry problems and his expert counsel and advice is a free service to members of the Association.

A full time office is maintained in Washington, D.C., for the use of the Government Affairs Committee. This committee has been headed for the past 20 years by the astute and highly regarded Admiral George LeSavage, an executive of the Frank G. Shattuck Company, operators of the Schrafft's Stores in New York. Admiral LaSavage is 80 years young, yet today he displays more vim, vigor and vitality than most people many years his junior. His department has always achieved a very satisfactory relationship with the powers that be in Washington and the list of his accomplishments is without parallel.

Heading the Membership Department is the affable, inimitable, Phillip D. (for dues) Johnson, author, lecturer, good-will ambassador and self appointed expert on public toilets.

The directorate is divided into many sub-committees too numerous to mention here. But, because of its special interest, mention should be made of the work of the NRA Public Health Committee. Its chairman is the brilliant Cyril L. Kegler, president of the popular and prosperous Bishop-Stoddard chain of cafeterias operating through the Midwest with headquarters in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Mr. Kegler, incidentally, is responsible for a training manual for

restaurant personnel, the only such document ever published. In a quiet, unassuming way, Mr. Kegler has contributed much of his time and money in the public interest. Too many nice things cannot be said about this man.

In 1953, principally through the efforts of Mr. Kegler and his NRA Public Health Committee, the National Food and Beverage Council was formed. Its specific project was to work in conjunction with the National Sanitation Foundation and its broad purpose was "to solicit public understanding and individual practices of good sanitation wherever food and drink are prepared and served—at home, in the school, factory or office, hotel, restaurant, motel, tavern, church, club or picnic grounds."

In order to understand the National Food and Beverage Council better, perhaps it would be well to answer these three questions:

1. Why was the project started?
2. How was the project started?
3. Who are the people interested and why?

Going back to point Number 1—how did this project come about? There were two basic factors: (a) recognition that industry-wise, little had been done in the promotion of good sanitation and food protection programs, and (b) the almost universal complaint of operators for a unified code of understandable regulations—free from requirements considered of doubtful value. It is fair to say, and this is certainly no reflection, that there is a conflict of opinion, especially in the field of interpretation, among thinking public health people just as much as there is among restaurant people. Would not then a unified nationwide code go a long way toward avoiding confusion and dissatisfaction? Quoting Mr. Kegler from the minutes which he gave at a recent board meeting, he states, "I must say that the best source of a broad understanding of the problem of conflicting regulations is among public health officials themselves. Sitting in with a group of statewide health men of Illinois and again during the many meetings with public health members of our NFBC, I have heard far more pointed criticism leveled at these problems than we of the industry would venture to express. It has, as a matter of fact, been this candid and highly cooperative spirit shown by these men of long experience in public health, that has provided us the continuous encouragement and belief in the eventual success of the Council's objectives."

Point Number 2—how was the project started? With the foregoing industry problems in mind, Walter F. Snyder, Director of the National Sanitation Foundation, was approached with this question, "Is it possible to get top level health people together with top level industry people for the purpose of developing a new recommended code and ordinance, and related

regulations and requirements?" This new code and ordinance would actually be a set of rules controlling sanitation in public eating places, based upon scientific laboratory tests or joint judgement of the group—one which by reason of the document would be a product of all, understood by all, believed in by all, and would be wholeheartedly supported by all. The response was favorable. The plan, fitting in as it did with the initial purpose of the National Sanitation Foundation, was soon under way. A representative group of individuals in industry and public health were contacted and the first meeting was held at Ann Arbor in July, 1953. Thus the NFBC was created—a specific project of the National Restaurant Association in which many other interested groups have joined hands.

Point Number 3—who are the people involved in the Council and who do they represent? Included are top industry men from all over America and many leaders of the public health service, including John D. Faulkner, Chief of Milk and Food Branch, Division of Sanitation, US Public Health Service. Co-chairmen for the Council are: Walter F. Snyder, Executive Director of the National Sanitation Foundation; John D. Faulkner, US Public Health Service, and Cyril L. Kegler, Director of the National Restaurant Association and, as mentioned above, chairman of the NRA Public Health Committee. Its ten member Executive Committee consists of five outstanding Public Health officials and five equally outstanding leaders of the National Restaurant Association; including Executive Vice President Frank Wiffler; Chief Legal Counsel Armin Kusswurm; Past President William O. Wheeler; John O. Sabatos of New York City, forthcoming President elect, and Director George Hanby.

Five separate committees have been formed. They are Policy, Code and Ordinance, Interpretative Man-

ual, Research and Education. These five committees are co-chaired by the ten members of the Executive Committee. Committee members include representatives of hotels, schools, hospitals, drugstores and licensed beverage dealers. Representation is about equally divided between industry volunteers and professional health people.

Of particular interest is the fact that Denver's own Associate Manager of Health and director of his division, J. Robert Cameron, has been an active member of the Council since its very beginning, and presently serves as a member of its educational committee.

Of the conclusions and future plans of the Council, Mr. Cameron can tell you much more. Suffice to say here, that one result of the activities of NFBC has been an invitation to the NFBC to be represented by a committee and to participate in the formation of a new US Public Health Code and Ordinance.

In conclusion, please permit just one observation from the restaurant operator's side of the fence. The duties and responsibilities of food service operators, since they are so many and so varied, are without a doubt as great as those of any other industry. The most perplexing difficulties are encountered in the sanitation division. Very few people make a career of scrubbing floors, washing dishes and pots and pans, even under the best of conditions. Bud Franke, of Little Rock, Arkansas, likes to tell about a conversation he once accidentally overheard between two of his employees. One said to the other, "The war must be over." The other asked, "How come?" Whereupon the first replied, "Because the boss talked back to me today!"

To conclude—there is an old Indian prayer appropriate to both sides of the fence, "Oh Lord, grant me the courage not to criticize my brother until I have walked one mile in by brother's moccasins."

FORTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING
HOTEL OLYMPIC — SEATTLE, WASH., SEPTEMBER 5, 6, 7, 1956