PRESS STATEMENT

MALCOLM FRASER:

BUTTER AND MARGARINE

May 28th, 1961

In the last few days two statements - one issued by a Government Department and the other by the Government - have been very largely misinterpreted. The first of these might appear to be a small matter but it is one that is nevertheless important and significant to large sections of the rural community.

The Department of Health, in its wisdom, published a small booklet entitled "Eat Better for Less".

In general, this booklet encourages the consumption of milk, meat, fish, eggs and cheese, vegetables and fruit, bread, flour and cereals. All this must be regarded as a good thing because these are products of our primary industries.

The booklet points out that you can spend money on these things and get a better value in proteins and vitamins than you can by spending it on other things. However, it is most unfortunate that the publicity given this booklet did not concentrate on those parts which are to the advantage of the rural community and could well have been emphasised, but rather concentrated on one sentence which I consider spoils the whole publication. Under a heading entitled "Butter and Table Margarine" there is a sentence which reads - "Butter and table margarine are equally good sources of fat and Vitamin "A"." This was the only sentence where any comparison was made between butter and margarine, but this was lifted out into the headline implying that the Department of Health believed that margarine is just as good for people as is butter.

Now, even if it is true that you can get as many vitamins out of margarine as butter, surely no one will try and say that it is as pleasant to eat margarine as it is to eat butter. The bracketing of the two together is unfortunate, but it would not have mattered very much if the publicity given the booklet had concentrated around these aspects which are of definite benefit to the rural industries rather than on highlighting the one matter that is not of advantage to those industries.
Author/s:
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Title:
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Date:
28 May 1961

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/40004

File Description:
Butter and margarine

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