

DR. PRICE'S SEARCH FOR HEALTH

MOTION PICTURE COMMENTARY

BY

TED KNIGHT (OF THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW)

Weston A. Price, D.D.S. left a successful practice in Cleveland, Ohio to conduct a 100,000 mile journey around the world to study the effects of diets of primitive people isolated and away from the influence of civilization.

Why would a busy talented dentist spend his time trudging through the stark deserts of Australia, bleak islands of the Hebrides, Semnole Indian swamps, snowbound Alpine villages, Amazon jungles, Arctic tundra, and remote tropic islands?

He felt he had to find the cause of dental caries and periodontal disease. In doing so, that it was more logical to examine those free from these diseases then to study people or animals who suffered from such afflictions. While this thinking was the opposite of usual research procedures, his efforts proved to be so basic and dramatic that he is now called the Darwin of nutrition.

The recorded research of Dr. Price is documented by the nearly 20,000 slides and photographs he took of these many different primitives. Employing the medium of filmography, the camera brings to life his travels and at the same time challenges many commonly held beliefs regarding inheritance. The rapid decline of 14 races of natives, when introduced to just a few of our so called civilized foods is earth shaking. The Price Pottenger Nutrition Foundation feels all professionals and lay people should become acquainted with the many different dietaries that produced robust excellent health in primitives and how

violations of the principles caused the same myriad of disease entities that so commonly afflict our civilization. Just think of all the labor and research that has been directed and expended toward finding the etiology of disease these last few hundred years and how simple was the answer.

Dr. Price's search for health took place during the 30's. It covered more than 100,000 miles before it was completed. The logistics of such travel, with one's wife, during the 1930's had to be most complex. Can you imagine the difficulties they faced just getting to remote islands, the chills of Alaska, the heat and density of jungles at the equator?

Price wrote about his wife, Florence, saying she was keenly interested in the same problems that intrigued him and that she developed all of the 18 to 20 thousand photos he took right on the spot. Later she hand colored over one third of the 3 x 4 lantern slides showing her untiring devotion to the cause.

Dr. Price was a prodigious worker for dentistry. He published 180 scientific articles and three books, was President of the Cleveland Dental Society and the Ohio State Dental Society. He was instrumental in founding the National Research Institute for which the American Dental Association gave this resolution: "Be it resolved that the American Dental Association commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Research Institute, the first research lab of the Association, and be it further resolved, that the pioneer efforts of Weston A. Price and his associates in promoting the

scientific development of the profession he recognized hereby in the record of the Association."

Weston Andrew Valleau Price was born in Canada in 1870. He received his D.D.S. from the University of Michigan in 1893 and his M. S. from the same university in 1913. The American Medical Association gave him a Certificate of Honor in 1914. He was a Fellow in the American College of Dentists and a Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Along with his Presidency of the Cleveland and the Ohio State Dental Societies were honorary memberships in many outstanding organizations. Along with these, he was an active member in the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, Biological Society of Great Britain and the International Association of Dental Research.

As a new dentist, fresh out of school, he started practice in North Dakota. In that first rough, cold and snowy winter he almost died of typhoid fever. His M. D.'s gave up hope of saving him, but in his quiet, kindly way he asked them permission to treat himself. Using his mother's old fashioned, folk medicine approach, with wild fruit, fish and milk made heavy with cream, he pulled himself from the brink of death.

It was this success with his own life that kindled the interest in nutrition that so filled his latter years. Desiring to find the cause of dental caries and periodontal disease led to his research among isolated native peoples.

With meticulous care he pursued these journeys to remote places. No

one will ever be able to duplicate his amazing expeditions, for primitives untouched by civilization are all but impossible to find. The few that exist would be too small a sample to be conclusive.

Every one of the 14 races he visited showed dramatically the same fine patterns of health.....though each followed different dietaries. All children born to the primitive groups reproduced racial patterns of their families without loss of facial or body form. There was very little or no dental caries, periodontal disease or malocclusion. Every jaw was well developed and had more than sufficient room for every wisdom tooth.

However, when the boats or trading posts came along, introducing for the first time the foods of commerce to these natives -- all hell broke loose. Teeth started to rot and decay within a year and gum disease appeared shortly thereafter. First generation children suffered severe facial and skeletal changes, accompanied by startling malocclusions, some cleft palates and club feet, along with a host of all the common diseases of America and Europe including cancer.

What were the Foods of Commerce? The simple few additions were white flour products, sugar, polished rice, jams, a few canned goods, and some vegetable oils. Sugar and white flour products represented 90% of the items traded. Only 10% were other foods, clothing and merchandise.

Not only did he record his findings with a myriad of pictures, but he sent samples of the food they ate to a laboratory he had established for analysis.

He found their primitive foods had four times the minimum daily requirements of our so - called civilized foods.

All of his examinations and studies of these 14 different races of people proved that inheritance was not the basic reason for their demise. These first generation children came from parents having the most perfect inheritance anyone could hope to have or to find. Without exception all races of the 14 promptly fell apart on our foods of commerce.

We so - called civilized people always think we have so much to teach primitive cultures. It rather appears the other way around.

Dr. Price's book, Nutrition and Physical Degeneration, was directed primarily toward lay audiences. For this reason it has received some professional criticism as being unscientific. Nothing could be further from the truth. He felt we doctors should readily see the work's importance and recognize our need to spread it to the public. Not only that, but Price showed way back in 1939 that primitives also declined mentally. We are just beginning to give credence to dietary and nutrition as a cause of crime, drug abuse, and lower moral standards all of which were evident in these remote people when they switched to our foods.

This film was highlights of Price's book "Nutrition and Physical Degeneration". One doctor says the film should be called ROHR - for its potential - that is Rehabilitation of the Human Race - ROHR.

While the film lists most of Price's places of travel and research, it doesn't portray the real extent of his expeditions. He examined primitives in:

1. 8 South Sea Islands, Polynesians, Melanesians, Micronesians
2. 13 trives of aborigines in Australia
3. Ammaori in 21 New Zealand districts - Maori
4. 39 Canadian Alaskan Indian and Eskimo tribes
5. Gaelics in the outer Hebrides
6. American Indians
7. Several South American Peruvian tribes and 1276 Peruvian skulls
8. Amazon jungle Indians
9. Isolated Swiss Alpine villages
10. And in much of Africa, 15 African tribes

May I quote Fean Farmer's words regarding Price:

When Marco Polo made his travels and returned from the Orient, nobody would believe his fanciful tales, until he slashed his garments and out spilled quantities of fabulous jewels.

From a pilgrimage equally exotic, Dr. Price also brought back treasures, photographs, slides, notebooks of observations, tables of analyses, measurements. Yet people were reluctant to believe the savage could teach them anything. The public demanded convenience, and science supplied them with dazzling arrays of crispy sugary, rainbow colored goodies, pleasant to the tongue, but sour to the body. A token fortification satisfied the careless and ignorant.

The primitive lived in harmony with Nature, because he had no other choice. Moderns looted Nature, because they didn't understand the price. Yet the complex problems of foul air, polluted water, poisoned soil and defective foods are not insoluble. If primitive Indians were willing to journey two hundred miles to secure kelp and fish eggs for their children, motivated consumers can also press for corrective action to safeguard their children.

Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come, is the French saying. The insights and wisdom of a nutrition Marco Polo, Dr. Weston A. Price, may yet trigger consumer reform.