

A FACT-FINDING INTERVIEW ABOUT OUR CAFETERIA

By Marse Grant

I am a comparative newcomer at Ecusta. I was very much impressed by the lovely cafeteria which I found here, and I made up my mind to become acquainted with its background and the purpose for which it has been started.

First, I visited the cafeteria itself. I went through the kitchen, the bakery, inspected the dish-washing equipment, storerooms, and the canteen, and I was certainly impressed by the completeness of the equipment and the fine condition in which it is maintained.

I knew that Mr. W. M. Shaw is in closest contact with our cafeteria and I decided that he would be in a better position than anyone else to tell me all about it. The interview below relates what transpired between Mr. Shaw and myself.

Q.* Mr. Shaw, will you please tell me something of the cafeteria and give me the benefit of your experience with it? Tell me when it was opened and also about the seating capacity and the purpose for which Ecusta started it.

A.* Our cafeteria was first opened on August 5, 1941, and has been in continuous operation ever since. In addition to the cafeteria, which has a seating capacity of nearly 400, we operate a canteen where quick

service is available and which is in operation the greater part of 24 hours a day. The same hot food which is served in the cafeteria is served throughout the mill for those employees who cannot leave their jobs to go to the cafeteria. We also serve hot coffee and cold drinks at different times throughout the mill. In addition to being used for the serving of meals during regular hours, the cafeteria is at the disposal of our employees for movies, which are shown every Thursday, and also for bingo parties and square dances. The equipment which Ecusta bought for the operation of its cafeteria is the most modern obtainable. The cafeteria has always maintained a high sanitary rating, issued to it by the North Carolina State Health Department, a rating which ranks among the highest in our State. We serve approximately 1,200 meals a day, in addition to the service which is rendered in the canteen.

Q.* Mr. Shaw, won't you please tell me what is the purpose for which Ecusta wants this cafeteria used?

A.* The cafeteria is to be used by all of our employees so that they can enjoy their meals under pleasant surroundings. It is, as the name implies, a self-serving restaurant, and the cafeteria employees always try their best to see to it that during the meal hours prompt service is rendered to those who visit the cafeteria. Ecusta feels that the cafeteria should be considered by all employees as their club, where they should feel at home, relax, and rest under pleasant surroundings. The cafeteria, as I told you previously, is used for entertainments of various types. In addition to this, we celebrate our Christmas parties in the cafeteria, where several thousand people—all of our employees, their wives, and children—celebrate the festivities together. Also, we very often give parties for visitors to Transylvania County. One of our invitations was extended to the Conference of the Governors of the United States, at which time more than 250 visitors, among them 20 of the governors, attended the Conference. Next month we are entertaining about

400 members of the National Editorial Association, who are holding their convention in Pinehurst and who are touring in Western North Carolina.

Q.* Mr. Shaw, has there been any change in the high standard of operation, and particularly in the quality of food which has been served in the cafeteria since it has been opened.

A.* No, we have always insisted, and will continue to do so, that the highest standard of quality be maintained on everything which is served in the cafeteria. In order to maintain the best quality of food, it frequently has been necessary for us to pay high prices for it. We did not want to substitute lower standards of quality.

Q.* Mr. Shaw, I have had frequent occasions lately to eat in various restaurants and cafeterias in the State, and I have noticed that prices for food which I consumed there were substantially higher than those which are being charged in the Ecusta cafeteria.

A.* Yes, this is a fact, and I am sure that many others besides you are aware of that. It should be kept in mind that, with a few minor exceptions, Ecusta has not increased prices in the cafeteria since the opening day in 1941.

Q.* In view of the low prices which are being charged at Ecusta compared with those being charged in outside eating places, how do you manage to operate to a point where costs are met? I understand that most industrial cafeterias are expected to collect for the dishes at least what it costs them.

A.* This is not the principle at Ecusta. Other industrial cafeterias which are being run on a price policy which gives the cafeteria department sufficient income to meet its costs, are