

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE NUTRITION SOCIETY

*A discussion was held in the Robin Brook Centre, St Bartholomew's Hospital, London on 23 July 1986 and formed part of the Four Hundred and Twenty-seventh Scientific Meeting\* of the Nutrition Society*

### DISCUSSION ON 'SHOULD THE NATIONAL DIET BE ALTERED TO PREVENT CORONARY DISEASE?'

#### Introductory remarks

By J. C. WATERLOW, *London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT*

*Chairman:* Ladies and gentlemen, this is a slightly unusual meeting of the Nutrition Society for two reasons. The Nutrition Society expressed a wish to become more closely involved in problems of current public health with regard to nutrition. In this context cardiovascular disease is, of course, a very obvious topic to discuss. The idea today is that the papers should try to present the author's own point of view. They should aim at persuasion, because at the end of the day people have to decide whether or not to act on particular propositions, and to take a decision one has to be persuaded. To act or not to act is still a decision and decisions are yet to be made by administrators, by health professionals and indeed by individuals. We have just heard from Professor Kaplan that in the United States they seem to be much more positive about making decisions than we are. I think that since we are human beings we are persuaded not only by scientific evidence but also sometimes by the way it is put across.

Since this meeting may well end in disorder, I would like to take this opportunity before it ends to thank the speakers.

The way we are going to proceed now is to have two talks without questions between them, the first by Professor James and the second by Professor Mitchell.

I call now on Professor James: 'Should the national diet be altered to prevent coronary disease?' This is what you have to make up your mind about.

\*Papers from this symposium on 'Nutrition and Cardiovascular Disease' appeared in the *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* (1987), vol. 46, pp. 331-377.