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FARM *and* FOOD POLICY

ANDERSON—

Food Rationing and Morale

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Food rationing and morale

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FARM *and* FOOD POLICY

Pamphlet No. **4** in the Series

FOOD RATIONING AND MORALE

by

C. ARNOLD ANDERSON

Twenty Cents

THE IOWA STATE
AMES



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WARTIME FARM AND FOOD POLICY SERIES

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To mobilize our nation's giant strength for war necessarily means a drastic readjustment in our ways of producing, distributing, and consuming everything we make. A few laggards, and people working at cross purposes, can slow down the whole nation if government authority is not used to bring them into line. But authority is not a substitute for public understanding and acceptance. As a matter of democratic principle and of efficiency, the citizens must know what has to be done in economic mobilization—and why and how. This series of pamphlets, prepared by members of the Department of Economics and Sociology at Iowa State College, deals with the what, why, and how of agricultural policy and food management.

Previous pamphlets have outlined the broad relations of food to the war effort and sketched techniques of dividing food supplies and getting maximum production. The use of farm prices to obtain the kinds and amounts of food production needed and the mobilization of necessary farm labor have been examined in detail.

The pamphlet "Food Rationing and Morale" stresses the importance of morale in wartime and outlines the essentials of a food rationing program that will maintain a high level of morale. In food rationing, as in so many other things, Americans on the home front are only beginning to gird themselves for the fight.

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Ames, Iowa, March 4, 1943

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FOOD RATIONING AND MORALE

C. ARNOLD ANDERSON

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THE FINDINGS*

Food rationing is the orderly and fair distribution of food under wartime shortage. No other procedure for dividing food can so efficiently and equitably direct the food to the families and the regions that need it. It is the only method of food sharing that can meet the combined triple test of economic efficiency, administrative simplicity, and morale protection.

Without rationing, national morale would be threatened by erratic or disorganized distribution of food supplies and by suspicion of the good faith of the government in democratic ideals.

Morale is the driving force in unified group activity. Morale is confidence in our collective values, plus harmony of the values of the individual with those of the nation, plus motivation to cooperate in the achievement of national values. High morale of a group helps in attaining goals.

Food management policies in the United States so far have neglected this morale factor. Both delays in rationing and some of the procedures used have caused morale to suffer unnecessarily. Food management does not appear to have been planned to utilize rationing to improve morale. Further

* This pamphlet is based on research carried on under Project 818 of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa. The study also was aided by a grant from the division of the Social Sciences of the Rockefeller Foundations, New York.

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poor handling of the food situation may easily create a crisis of morale.

The effect of food rationing on morale will depend to a considerable extent on the detailed provisions and how they are administered. Not just any system of rationing will benefit morale. The program of rationing that we adopt must give ample scope for each person to play his part. Definite rules make it possible for everyone to know whether he is obeying the regulations or not. Orders should be so stated that individuals must commit specific acts to break them, not just drift into lawbreaking. England's experience with rationing points the way for the United States to design a food rationing system that will build morale.

A rationing program must meet five standards if it is to foster morale. (1) Rationing must limit the special advantages of certain groups arising from income, leisure time, or favored access to food production areas. (2) Rationing must encourage adjustment of food consumption to needs by special ration allowances or supplementary feeding projects. (3) Rationing must be so framed as to insure variety and choice in diets. (4) Rationing procedures must insure the cooperation of grocers. (5) Rationing must be explained to the public until ignorance and suspicion are eliminated.

The failure of the public to demand more rationing is a failure of education for rationing.

The failure of the public to support rationing and its administrators is an obstacle to efficient rationing.

Rationing in practice changes our customary ways of living. The lines of status between social groups are weakened and individual and personal relationships modified. New customs of shopping and food use affect family life. New groups—food boards, bootleggers, and food police—become a part of the community. Governmental responsibility is widened. Ideals of equality are reinforced. Equity becomes a more meaningful goal as its unexplored possibilities are revealed.

Food rationing can solidify morale. War aims are accepted more wholeheartedly. Energies for cooperation are released. The definiteness of rationing shows everyone how to participate in the common effort. The average person gains a new sense of importance. Shared sacrifices are less burdensome.

On the other hand, when rationing is poorly planned and run, morale is undermined. Without adequate education, the strangeness of rationing frightens some persons, and administrative fumbling awakens fears of regimentation and of inadequate food supplies. Uncertainty and ambiguity leave the citizen with no sure plan for action. Persisting inequalities create suspicion. Temptations to lawbreaking multiply. Ignorance or confusion leads to evasions.

Cooperation of administrators and public will make rationing a success. Rationing is America's new adventure in war-time democracy.



What do we want to accomplish with rationing? We want to help insure that our production resources are used with the greatest efficiency. We want to see to it that sufficient food reaches all the regions of the country despite many handicaps. We are determined that the burdens of war shall be shared fairly. Since we have to work together and sacrifice together much more closely in wartime, we must distribute food equitably as well as efficiently.

Elaborate rationing schemes would not be needed if Americans lived as their grandparents did in a rural society where most families produced their own food. If every family knew its neighbors, informal community opinion would assure fairness, unless shortages became critical. But we live in an industrial and urban society, and we must set up complex arrangements to produce and distribute food. We must enforce rules strictly if our system of food sharing is to work with a minimum of friction and evasion. Nothing could be more individual than food consumption. Yet what could be more cooperative than the activities by which we produce food and distribute it?

In our society most people buy their food rather than raise it. They must have complete confidence that in doing their assigned jobs they will not fail to obtain their fair share of food or other necessities. And food is closely connected with the roots of our feelings of security as well as making up a large part of the typical family budget. It is imperative that the Federal Government insure each family its share of the available food. Everyone must realize that providing an adequate amount of food for each family requires the cooperation of all in food management. Rationing is the effective method of guiding this cooperation and providing this assurance.

When there are food shortages, rationing is the most suitable

means of obtaining orderly and fair distribution of the available food. Rationing must work to the general satisfaction if national morale is to be high enough to carry us through the difficulties of fighting the war and winning the peace. Here lies a major problem.

Rationing Affects Morale and Morale Affects Rationing

Satisfactory food rationing builds and protects morale. A well-run rationing program manifests the concern of the government for public welfare. Rationing is evidence of a genuine effort to realize our accepted ideals of equality.

Because we need rationing, however, is no proof that just any kind of rationing can do the job.

No rationing system is perfect, but some are more effective than others. Any rationing plan creates new threats to morale as well as eliminating or diminishing old ones. We cannot possibly solve our morale problems in the food field unless we direct our rationing program constantly with an idea to removing, as they arise, the irritations that weaken morale. A poorly designed or carelessly administered rationing scheme may fail to convince people that we have achieved orderly distribution or equity. It may instead arouse feelings of injustice or resentment at the nuisance of rules that bring little tangible benefit. Then the public will regard rationing as evidence of bureaucratic incompetence or bad faith and questionable motives.

Rationing gets off to a better start and the administrator's tasks are made much easier when the initial state of national morale is healthy. If the national war effort is supported loyally and if we look forward with hope to the peace after the war, then rationing will be welcomed as it is understood. If citizens normally obey the laws, there will be little evasion of rationing, and people will be more patient with the inevitable minor annoyances. Each rationing program well begun makes the path of the next program smoother. Ration-

ing and morale may mutually support each other, or each may work detrimentally upon the other.

Morale Has Been Neglected

Thus far, when people have talked about food management they have discussed price incentives and price ceilings, the inflationary spiral, agricultural production goals, to ration or not to ration. These questions all revolve around the indispensable economic aspects of food management. But the meaning of these various policies for the morale of the nation has received too little attention.

Economy and morale are inseparable in wartime food control. At each point in the production and distribution system, there are alternative economic policies; whenever a choice is made the morale effects should be examined. Similarly, there are alternative policies from the standpoint of morale, and choices here should bring in the economic factor. In this pamphlet the focus is on the morale side which has until recently been largely neglected.

Outline of Pamphlet

The subject of this pamphlet is the effects upon morale of food rationing as a technique for dealing with food shortages. First, the nature of morale and the conditions that elevate or undermine it will be examined. Then the relation between administration of rationing and morale will be considered. The effects of rationing upon our usual ways of living and upon our attitudes will be described very broadly in order to demonstrate how deeply a rationing program roots itself in a society. Five standards for a food rationing program designed to protect morale will be outlined and both present and prospective rationing programs evaluated in terms of these standards. Suggestions will be made for the improvement of rationing in order to strengthen morale. In the conclusion the principal effects of rationing, favorable and harmful, upon morale will be brought together.

WHAT IS MORALE?

Everybody talks about morale. Almost anyone would decide confidently at any particular time whether morale in his community or in the whole nation is good or bad. Not many would know how they arrived at their judgments. Only a few of these persons would be able to define morale in so many words.

Morale is most severely tested in a crisis when it is necessary to carry out a program involving everyone's effort and with much sacrifice of separate interests.

We all know that morale is not something like the measles that you have or don't have. Morale is a matter of degree: good, so-so, poor.

Morale is high when the members of a group agree on what they want to do and can actually get themselves moving in the direction of that goal. Morale is poor when people bicker about what the program is to be and when many individuals try to dodge responsibility and evade the rules.

In a nutshell, national morale is excellent when most of the citizens believe that their lives have some purpose, when they willingly pitch in and strive for the things they believe in, and—not least—when everyone is working toward the same broad goals rather than for a thousand unrelated ends.

Now let's elaborate this description of good morale a bit. National morale cannot be high if that of individual citizens is shaky. They must individually live purposefully; each must find his life oriented toward a definite goal. But the members of the nation must also realize vividly that their individual goals are linked together as part of a common group purpose. The contrast between American public opinion before Pearl Harbor and afterward illustrates this point.

But it isn't sufficient just to agree on a common goal. It is necessary for everyone to desire that goal strongly enough so that he will actually work to achieve it against great obstacles

or opposition. It is easier to agree that something is worthwhile than it is to figure out how to attain it, particularly easier than to do all of the unpleasant tasks that one by one lead up to the final result. Individual goals must give way to common goals. We have to work not only for the things we individually want but also work for the things other people want, because we know that what they seek and what we strive for are mutually interdependent.

Since a nation is a very large group and its citizens are doing many different things in aiding the war program, it must be made clear to everyone that all the others are sharing in the necessary sacrifices.

Measuring Morale

Morale is expressed in tangible behavior patterns. But it takes some skill to be able to estimate accurately the state of morale of any given group. Training is needed in interpreting attitudes and gaining some understanding of the usual ways in which people act and speak.

Merely because people complain about something is no proof they are seriously alarmed about it. Griping is a favorite indoor sport, particularly about the Government. We have to allow for this normal level of grumbling before we can decide whether morale is improving or deteriorating. It is particularly necessary to distinguish vague complaints about red tape or regimentation from specific refusals to cooperate and searching for every possible way to evade rules.

Objective actions are usually better than words as an index of what people think. In connection with food rationing we would look for signs like hoarding or bootlegging as symptoms of weak morale. We are fortunate in being able to draw upon the experience of other countries to aid us in judging the American situation. We have much information about food management in England and Germany during the last war and more from England in this war. English morale appears

to have fluctuated with failures or successes in rationing. By using this English experience, with some allowance for the different nature of American society, problems can be foreseen before they develop here, and ways of dealing with them may be suggested.

Thus, when citizens act purposefully, when they have the will to keep striving, and when they work together—then national morale is high. Food rationing can help to create a level of morale adequate to the tasks ahead.

MORALE AND RATIONING ADMINISTRATION

Administration is the essential link between the objectives for food rationing and the results, economic and morale. Both in planning and supervising rationing, all procedures must be studied for their probable effects upon morale.

Details in administration are of major importance. Careless administration impairs the faith of the people in the good intentions or capability of their government. At the extreme, disillusionment can lead to a breakdown of the whole system of food distribution, a movement of larger and larger proportions of supplies through illegal or irregular channels, and ultimately to a drastic deterioration of national morale.

In the pre-rationing period through which we have just been passing, food administrators have failed in both deeds and words to support national morale as much as they might. In their defense it should be recognized, however, that they have been to some degree handicapped by the pressures of special groups operating directly and through Congress. What have been some of the main defects?

In the first place, rationing programs have been too long delayed. Postponement has been due in part to a lack of conviction that rationing was necessary and to the inability of administrators to realize that a rationing program would redound to their credit. They have been more aware of the

criticisms of those who would be inconvenienced or who would object to more government regulations than of the support of those who would be keenly aware of the personal benefits that rationing would bring. Successive delays have increased the difficulties of introducing rationing smoothly and of administering a program once it has been launched.

Notices of rationing some time before it goes into effect have also caused trouble. Hoarding has been stimulated despite the rule that supplies on hand were to be declared. People with small consciences and large pocketbooks stock up. The handling of coffee rationing is an example of what not to do. The beginning of the shoe rationing program and the sudden freeze of canned meats and fish are examples of what to do. When the difficulties of rationing food without advance notice are too great, the reasons should be publicized more than they have been in the past.

Similar principles apply in making changes in a rationing program once it is under way. It is harmful to morale to issue contradictory instructions or predictions or to make large changes in the system that may appear to the public as arbitrary or as attempts to cover errors. When changes are made, they should have an obvious relation to some event that is widely known to the public; for example, bad weather conditions for crops, or conquest of territory in which civilians must be fed.

Whenever folks live in a novel and uncertain situation where conditions change in mysterious ways, they feel insecure and their morale suffers. During the last year or more, the public has had to form its impressions about food management upon the basis of rumor or incomplete and even misleading information. When contradictory announcements are made, the public seizes on those most optimistic. Publicity about abundant crops and huge production goals left us unprepared for recent scare stories telling how serious the food situation is. No one authoritatively pointed out until recently that in war the demand for food outruns all expectations.

Rumors of specific shortages lead to suspicion and hoarding. The public is confused and confusion arouses anxiety. Then we have a nasty morale situation on our hands. There has not been enough preparation for the beginning of rationing. The over-all situation has not been explained. When the reasons for rationing are not understood, the introduction of rationing injures morale.

It is a mark of the failure of public education that the public has not demanded rationing, but has instead resented it.

There has been much emphasis on the need for simplified administration of food rationing, and wisely so. There is no reason to make any system more complicated than it has to be to get the job done. But how complex food management must be depends in part on what we are trying to accomplish. What appears to be simple for the administrator in some central office may be distressingly annoying for the average housewife or inconsiderate of consumers with unusual needs. We need simplicity in rationing, certainly, but we need efficiency of distribution and especially good morale much more.

RATIONING CHANGES CUSTOMARY WAYS OF LIFE

Food rationing modifies every aspect of living in larger or smaller degree. Rationing is not a fad that passes by, touching only the surface of living. Rationing works itself deeply into the texture of society.¹

The relative positions of social groups will be changed, personal and family relationships modified, and new social groups created.

Social Class Relationships

Equity is basic in rationing. And since the amount and kind of food we eat is so closely linked with our social position,

¹ Reading month by month the published English *Parliamentary Debates*, one obtains a vivid picture of the obvious and the subtle, the important as well as the trivial, modifications in English life growing out of their intensive and constructive experience with rationing. From these debates come many of the illustrations used here and many hints of adventures in store for Americans as they launch out upon a new and promising social experiment.

the equity emphasis of rationing weakens the boundaries dividing social classes.

Rationing makes people less certain about the scales of prestige they have customarily used. Snobbish patterns of food use appear less important in times of shortage. The experience of sharing food more equally convinces some families that fresh fruit and butter perhaps were not intended by providence for the exclusive use of the "better" families. Caste lines are blurred when Negroes receive the same number of ration coupons, even if their incomes will not permit them actually to buy as much as most whites do.

Dogmatic beliefs about the "natural" inferiority of poor people are toned down when we are told authoritatively that equal minimum rations are essential for health and that factory canteens boost production. Rationing provides an unusual opportunity for educating the more fortunate members of the population about the serious handicaps under which people unable to afford adequate diets have been living.

New kinds of privileged groups emerge and new types of group consciousness are stimulated by the provision of special rations to certain groups and by the spread of school lunches and factory canteens. Traditional relationships between the government and its citizens are reshuffled when children or armament workers rather than particular industries become primary objects of attention in the name of "the general welfare." We may come to regard minimum diets as basic concerns of social policy.

These changes in group and class positions tangibly affect morale. Losses in privilege or status by upper groups may lessen their morale, if they believe that the structure of the society from which they benefited is being unjustly undermined. But other individuals in previously favored groups will gain in morale as they experience a sense of greater unity with the rest of the population. Moreover, the improved conditions of the much more numerous groups who were previously underprivileged are a net gain for national morale. Let these

few illustrations of morale effects suffice now; the summing up of morale changes is postponed to a later section.

Entertaining

Individual and personal relationships also are modified by rationing. The more formal types of entertaining are given up in favor of informality. The old pot-luck suppers return to fashion. The ingenuity of hostesses gains importance. Entertaining without food becomes a new art.

These novelties do not necessarily make social life more dull. Rationing introduces new topics of conversation and gossip along with closer observation of and visiting with one's neighbors: "What do you mix with bones to make good soup?" "Grocer Smith must have set aside a nice steak for Susie Thompson."

Family Relationships

It is in the life of the individual family, in the last analysis, that the burdens as well as the benefits of rationing show up. The gains and the losses in family prestige and pride have already been mentioned. There are also innumerable changes in household routine. Shopping practices change; there must be greater care and deliberateness in purchasing if the family is to have an adequate diet. New ways of preparing food and new menus must be learned. New discoveries of food satisfaction are enjoyed.

Without rationing, food shortage leads to erratic and disorganized distribution of time among household duties. Shopping around and standing in queues soak up many hours. With rationing, shopping time can be reduced, although the experiences of English families indicate that even with a good rationing system shopping and food management in the home take more time than before the war. All of these readjustments are tiring, despite the adventures of novelty. They lead to endless complaining that the people who make the rationing rules never saw a kitchen and must all of them live in hotels.

As these difficulties of the housewife in obtaining accustomed foods become general topics of conversation, some of the blame for poor or unfamiliar meals slips from her shoulders. Nevertheless, she must listen to much grumbling, even if she is a resourceful cook. She must tempt husband and children to try new dishes, and her task of training children in food habits is much harder than previously.

Readjustments in food preferences are perhaps most difficult for the men, who normally may have been able to insist upon eating what they liked. But the inevitable changes in diet perhaps have a correspondingly greater educational value for men. Many families are forced to adopt better diets willy-nilly, and some of these new habits will persist after rationing ceases. A generous educational program can make this beneficial outcome more certain.

New Community Groups

Rationing calls into being new groups and agencies at all levels from the local community to the nation. On the local level, in contact with the average citizen, new kinds of social groups or new varieties of old types appear in the network of community life. Prominent among the new groups are ration boards, food bootlegging gangs, and food police.

English experience has shown the utility of placing responsibility upon local committees for much of the explanation and detailed operation of rationing. Public support is enlisted and administrative flexibility facilitated when some of the functions of food management are decentralized and placed in the hands of community agencies. Central officials are spared much pattering around with petty complaints, and the complainers can blow off steam in local offices. New local leaders demonstrate their capacities, and local social controls run in new channels. During the war these and other local war agencies acquire importance, perhaps even first rank in community affairs.

Whenever the public demands something that is forbidden

to them, conditions are ripe for the creation of black markets. Price control and unsatisfied demands for food in wartime create an opportunity for bootlegging. Rationing checks runaway tendencies, though complete control is impossible.

If more food moves into a market than those with ration books desire or are able to purchase, then the extra food may be sold illegally to those without coupons. This is most likely to occur in the case of perishable foods that would spoil if held. In addition there is the temptation to sell the food that would have been taken by families holding ration cards to those without coupons if the latter are willing to pay more than the ceiling price. Criminal groups stand ready to organize the hijacking and bootlegging in black markets; we have had many cases already in this country. The more wholeheartedly rationing is accepted by the public, the less incentive and opportunity there is for these illegal methods of food distribution.

An elaborately regulated food distribution system backed up by criminal penalties calls for food police to supervise and inspect. Their number need not be large if racketeering does not get out of hand. If we are less fortunate we will have to deal with a group like the prohibition agents of recent memory. If racketeering receives any kind of welcome from the public, the former alliance between respectable public and illegal groups will reappear. If such serious flaws develop, evasion will become the main amateur sport of a large proportion of citizens.

ATTITUDES AND IDEALS

Attitudes can be a source of strength in meeting new problems; they may also inhibit our will to act. Successful public policies rest upon favorable attitudes. Major rationing programs are being launched. What attitudes do we now have that help, or hinder, these new programs? What changes in attitudes will result from successful, or unsuccessful, rationing?

Rationing Focuses Upon Equity

Ideals of equality are vital elements in American folk traditions and political life. Nevertheless, widely different levels of living have been accepted as normal. Rationing that calls for equal sharing must rely not only on ideals of equality and heed some traditional differences in living; it must capitalize on the American zest for efficiency—getting to the goal despite the difficulties.

Rationing as well as wartime unity reinforces our sentiment for fairness and increases our distaste for the existence of luxury and low standards side by side. On the other hand, when privileged groups are leveled down they sometimes find new reasons for emphasizing other values as a check upon equity; and when policies are introduced to give larger rations to those with special needs the rest of the people may try to demand special favors for themselves regardless of need. Nevertheless, the overwhelming tendency under rationing is toward more genuine emphasis upon equality and fair sharing.

Ideals of equity may receive a particular local definition in communities having subordinated minorities of unpopular race and nationality. Federal relief programs in some sections during the depression aroused intense resistance from the more fortunate whites when Negroes received anything approaching adequate allowances. Rationing will bring similar prejudices to the surface, and in some localities Negroes may be denied the right to the stipulated food ration. Dealers will be encouraged by their white neighbors to evade the regulations. When shopping, Negroes may have to wait until whites are served, and Negro stores may be less considerately treated by wholesalers. Preferred cuts of meat will be "gone" when Negroes come to buy. Foods distributed through the schools may less often reach Negro children in fair proportion. We refer to Negroes in particular because they are our most prominent minority group. In lesser degree Italians and

Poles also may suffer, as well as many of those who live "on the other side of the tracks." Rationing will undermine some of these caste or class attitudes, and judicious administration can prevent resentment among privileged groups from expressing itself too blatantly.

Government Interference

Attitudes about the proper sphere of government action are pointed up by rationing as new rules are laid down controlling behavior that was formerly unregulated. Both the protective and the welfare conceptions of the state are reinforced in total war. We admit the necessity of taking special measures to improve the diet of children or of heavy workers. To make rationing work efficiently, we demand more police action from government. This greater public tolerance of more centralized control will not recede quite to our pre-war standards of what the government ought to do or not do. Not everyone welcomes these changes or is willing to acquiesce in them. Some assert that rationing is un-American. Some worry about taxes and the growth of bureaucracy. These anxieties will become rallying points for nagging complaints about rationing. Only efficient rationing can keep these doubts and objections within moderation.

Law Observance

Many people explain the development of black markets or other evasions as due to imperfections in the administration of rationing or the "cussedness of human nature." Actually these illegal activities are indexes to more deeply rooted traits of the society, in particular the attitudes concerning law observance. Willingness to engage in or condone law breaking is apparently much more widespread in normal times in the United States than in other civilized nations. We have a double attitude toward law, growing out of our special history. We idealize the "rule of law," and we put almost

unlimited faith in the power of legislation to correct social ills. But we have also our pioneer tradition of resentment of authority and a tendency to believe that any particular law is probably unjustified. We especially resent control over our intimate personal conduct; illustrations are easy to find: "fixing" traffic tickets, or prohibition.

We may accordingly anticipate that if shortages of food become very noticeable in this country, we shall have great difficulty in enforcing rationing—particularly if the public is not "sold" up to the hilt on rationing in the near future. Although traditions of law observance are by all accounts much stronger in England, yet the volume of food violations, though small, even there has been growing. Patriotism will strengthen our desire to make rationing work, but if evasions get a good start the cumulative spiral of illegal action will no doubt rise more rapidly here. Each report of evasion arouses suspicion that rules are being flaunted generally and lowers each person's determination to obey the law.

Already bootlegging of meat in the larger cities is moving rapidly toward the position liquor held during prohibition: "Sure, I know a guy what can sell you all you want if you've got the dough," or "Don't be a 'sucker'—everyone else is getting extra meat!" A growing proportion of our meat is moving through illegal markets. In an impersonal society the rules must be definite and policing strict if evasions are to be held to a minimum, since local opinion is not effective.

The Rural "Gray Market"

In the rural communities, the food situation has a rather special character. Food producers are likely to believe that they should have the right to eat all they want of what they raise. They find it difficult to visualize how a little giving to relatives or selling to friends in town can cause any serious break in the rationing system. There will be a great deal of this kind of rule breaking in farming sections of the country.

The rural situation does differ from that in cities; rural evasions are more typically individual and neighborly and occasional rather than deliberate and organized. Any regulations restricting farm sales must be widely publicized and very clear-cut if the cooperation of farmers is to be secured. For example, many farmers have probably slaughtered and sold more livestock than was legal because of misunderstanding, and they have unknowingly sold livestock to dealers who were buying illegally. Much of this illegal livestock dealing could have been avoided had farmers been better informed and had they been required to sell only to licensed dealers so that other sales were definitely and obviously illegal acts.

While evasions by farmers are not any the less illegal than evasions by other people, they are often sufficiently different in motivation to be called the gray market in contrast to the urban black market.

STANDARDS FOR FOOD RATIONING TO PROMOTE GOOD MORALE

Each day's newspaper recounts some event illustrating how rationing is becoming enmeshed in all our social relationships and how it is modifying our basic attitudes. And rationing has barely started. If rationing is to have a constructive influence upon American life with a minimum of undesirable results, we must systematically make our plans with definite morale goals in view. It is possible to set up standards against which the developing rationing programs can be checked with respect to their contribution to orderly and equitable food distribution.

Morale standards for rationing need not be made up out of one's fancy. Five criteria are set up on the basis of the inherent nature of food rationing combined with a study of the experience of other nations. It is significant that four of these goals (numbers 1, 2, 3, 5) apply to every industrialized nation in the war, whatever its individual political structure.

1. *Limit special advantages which some groups enjoy in obtaining food.* Large income, shopping time, and access to food supplies are the main factors here. If there were no rationing, families with larger incomes would be less affected by rising prices and would be able to find private sources of supply. Women with considerable leisure and fewer household duties would be able to shop around until they found what they wanted. Some families are able to raise their own food or live where they can easily buy from producers directly. So without rationing there are many groups in the nation who would be able to obtain more than the public regards as their share of food. Satisfactory rationing takes the goal of equity seriously by giving each individual the same ration allowance.² There will continue to be ways of getting around the rationing rules or taking advantage of loopholes that favor those with more money and time, but rationing nevertheless establishes an over-all working uniformity.

2. *Adjust food consumption to needs.* There are many individuals and several groups of workers with particular nutritional needs. Children and adolescents require larger shares of protective foods if their growth is not to be permanently injured. Heavy workers need more energy. Special plans must be made, either as an integral part of the rationing system or as a supplement to it, for these imperative food needs. Provision must be made to provide supplementary food to low income families. If these steps are not taken, equity is not attained.

3. *Maintain variety and choice in diets.* We are more content when we can follow our customary food patterns. When there is a margin of choice among foods, we feel less regimented and experience less intense frustration. A rationing system can be arranged to allow a considerable range of choice and to satisfy peculiar group diet preferences.

4. *Gain cooperation of food dealers.* Business men occupy

²With modifications of the kinds implied under point 2.

a key position in American society, and the ideals of private enterprise rank high among our social values. Rationing inevitably puts a heavy burden upon the food distribution industry, particularly the retail dealer. We can utilize the interests of these groups to improve the efficiency of rationing. The operation of the food stamp plan showed how useful to the nation the cooperation of this business group can be. The wholehearted support of grocers will eliminate what would otherwise be a center for discontent and evasion.

5. *Explain rationing to the public.* Successful rationing requires the full and willing participation of the public for whose benefit the program is designed. Rationing involves so definite a modification in many parts of our economic and social structure, that we cannot depend upon unaided popular understanding. Without sufficient education the public will not welcome rationing nor adjust to the changes needed from time to time.

These five criteria of a good rationing program are not counsels of perfection. They are practicable guiding principles observed in the successful food rationing program in England and other countries today. Public morale will be immeasurably strengthened if they are taken into account. Neglect of these principles under conditions of wartime food shortage will lead to serious discontent and sabotage of rationing as well as to diminished production of war goods and deteriorating health conditions.

FOOD RATIONING IN OPERATION

1. LIMIT SPECIAL ADVANTAGES

The first main step toward achieving equity in our food rationing program is the issuing of ration coupons giving equal shares to everyone in the same age group. Insistence upon the rule that one cannot purchase rationed foods without giving up his coupons restricts evasion. Other equalizing steps can also be taken. We must gradually limit the usual

privileges of larger incomes in buying foods outside the ration controls, the special advantages of those with plenty of leisure to shop, and consumption by those who raise food. Public support of rationing will not persist, as food shortages become more severe, if the government says rationing is fair but the public sees many people obtain more than their quotas. Morale depends on equity.

Equity is not absolute, however. Our ideal of fairness is a customary definition, and we are continually reinterpreting it in the light of changing conditions. It is not likely that there will be any general demand that everyone eat the same kinds and amounts of food nor that everyone cut his food consumption by the same proportion or to the same amount. In practice we are going to insist that the ration *quotas* be uniform. So long as food supplies remain somewhere near normal there will be little outcry if some people manage to buy a little more food than others, or to get the most favored food items more frequently—whether because they have higher incomes, more shopping time, or access to farm sources of supply. Families with cars can pool gasoline and those with extra cash can take weekend train trips into the countryside in search of eggs or butter. As supplies drop, however, there will be a growing demand for curtailing such privileges.

Every new policy intended to eliminate or curb special advantages involves a balancing of equity against administrative practicability.

The Income Factor

In times of war shortage, the limitation of "excess" buying by those with high incomes is one of the most important aspects of equity. Equal ration quotas are a first step in this direction.

But whenever it is inadvisable or impossible to ration some food, as fresh vegetables, the income factor comes back into the picture. Price controls of unrationed foods are not too effective, as English experience indicates. There the question

arose of how to prevent a grocer from forcing a customer to buy a cucumber at a fancy price in order to obtain tomatoes. While prices of both vegetables are controlled, few persons watch what happens to unpopular cucumbers; but everyone has his eye on tomato prices. This is more serious the greater the importance to people of particular unrationed foods, and the higher the prices of any unrationed foods rise.

Curtailement of such income privileges as restaurant eating will also be demanded if supplies become really short. Food served in restaurants is already being brought somewhat within bounds by limiting the amounts allowed to restaurants according to the number of meals they have served in recent months; this will cut down on the luxury and specialty establishments as the foods they have featured come under ration controls. Later we may follow the British policy and limit meal prices (and the number of courses) or insist that every restaurant serve a standard meal at a standard price. We might even go so far as to attempt the German method of deducting ration coupons for meals away from home, but this system would be so complicated actually to carry out that its introduction here is most unlikely.

Families with generous incomes are more likely to benefit from the opportunities of dealers to favor preferred customers without breaking any rules. Those who have traded with the same grocer for a long time and who buy large orders will receive these boons. The dealer can set aside some special item before the supply is exhausted or he can hold back an especially nice cut of meat. When so many families move about for jobs, the more stable ones gain advantages of this kind. Of course, not all the favors go to wealthy families; the neighbors and friends of the grocer also gain. But income differences do count.

The Time Factor

When food is short and rationing is incomplete, time is almost as valuable as money. Women with no small children

and without employment can use their leisure to shop at quiet hours. They can more easily shop around for the unrationed food items and get places at the head of the line whenever there are food queues. Of course under rationing there are not supposed to be queues, but there are for unrationed foods—and even for rationed foods when store help is scarce or when favorite foods have been “pointed” so low that they are bought up in a hurry. In war industry centers and wherever there have been great increases in population we will have to take measures as the English did: setting aside special shopping hours or releasing working women during certain hours on particular days. Adjustments of this kind make rationing more equitable and diminish irritations as well as cut down the number of absentees from work.

Limiting Access to Food Supplies

How shall we limit the advantages of those who raise foodstuffs at home? How can we prevent private selling by farmers to relatives and friends in town? At the moment this is not a problem; in fact, home gardens are being encouraged. But when rationing begins to pinch, people living in cities will doubtless demand that something be done. England has been able to use feed import permits to check up on most of the home butchering and private selling, but we have a larger proportion of food producers, and we do not import feed. Patriotic appeals can accomplish something. Strong price incentives can be used to induce delivery to regular markets. In the event of extreme shortages of food, the most practicable method will probably be to give farm families a smaller ration quota for what they buy, in order to allow for the average amount of food normally raised and eaten at home. We should begin now to devise procedures by which if necessary we can keep track of essential foods from producer clear through to consumer.

Thus, we can interpret equity as strictly as we wish in

setting up the rules for food rationing. Equal rations combined with special checks upon the privileges of those with more income or more time or special access to food production areas make up a flexible combination to insure a basic uniformity of food consumption levels.

2. ADJUST FOOD CONSUMPTION TO NEEDS

Food needs are not identical for everyone. Vegetarians require more cheese and eggs than those who eat meat. Children should drink more milk. Those doing heavy physical labor must eat a larger amount of food. The more we emphasize the ideal of equity in food consumption, the more we realize that we must give extra food or special foods to certain groups if they are in fact to stand on the same level of nourishment with others. We must also see to it that everyone can afford enough food for minimum essentials of good health. Insofar as rationing contributes to good nutrition for a large proportion of the population, it contributes to morale both because it seems fair and because of the associated physical well-being of the people. The relation between good nutrition and good morale is becoming more widely recognized today.

With the large supplies of many foods that we may anticipate for the immediate future in the United States, the same ration quota for everyone will in fact permit a considerable proportion of the population the right to buy more food than they have usually purchased. The advantage of uniform quotas is that those with larger incomes or more shopping time cannot bid away the food set aside for the rest of the population. But when supplies are really short (a situation already appearing in some foods) some method must be developed for making more than average amounts of food available to those with especially great needs, while holding "normal" ration allowances down to approximately what is needed by the majority of adults. This problem is clearly recognized from the start whenever milk is rationed.

Special Rations and Supplementary Feeding

Two methods have been used in countries with food rationing to provide additional food to groups needing protective diets or more energy. A plan, that at first glance is simple, grants special ration quotas above those permitted the rest of the population. Reserving milk for children or nursing mothers and offering special diets to invalids appeal to nearly everyone as essential and fair. But there has been no such uniformity of opinion about giving selected groups of adult workers more to eat. The problem in these cases is to decide what workers are to be favored; not even the workers themselves can agree. White-collar workers cannot see the problems of miners, for example. In some cases nutritional science can guide the administrators. Ordinarily, the second method, supplementary feeding, is likely to prove simpler.

A trip to a war factory demonstrates that a large part of the employees do not have the right foods when they carry their lunches and that they will not always buy the best foods from a lunchroom around the corner. Installing supervised lunchrooms or lunch wagons permits selection of the foods served and setting of prices in accordance with dietetic principles. When these lunchrooms "pay their way" they are simply a convenient method of making more than ration allowances available to workers. This approach to the problem of improved nutrition permits us to get results more simply and probably cheaper than by working out elaborate differential ration schedules. The benefits extend also to the families of the workers, since when the breadwinner eats a meal where he works, the rest of the family does not feel obligated to give up part of its food to him.

School lunches are another variety of supplementary feeding to which we have given hearty approval in recent years. Besides improving health, school feeding simplifies the problems of mothers in providing good diets for children under the restricted conditions of rationing. Children's nutritional

condition can be improved even when their mothers have limited knowledge about diet. School lunches could accomplish these ends even without subsidy. When the public appreciates better the necessity of protecting child health in wartime, we can extend the facilities. At the moment public indifference threatens to curtail school lunches as an economy move.

Any morale improvement is of course a production incentive. In this sense satisfactory rationing motivates the majority of the population to more strenuous war efforts. But the decision to allow more food, whether as additional rations or through supplementary feeding plans, will involve the assumption in the case of adults that they will be stimulated to respond by working harder. These privileges are tangible rewards to those groups whose jobs require the most energy and greatest discomfort. By this method the flow of labor from non-essential into war industries can also be guided; for example, by a rule that governmentally supported factory canteens could not be installed in plants making luxury goods.

The use of rationing quotas and even of some kinds of feeding programs as incentives is open to abuse and is not likely to be adopted unless food supplies become distinctly short. Difficult problems arise in drawing the lines between industries and categories of workers to be favored.

By contributing to holding food prices down, rationing helps keep food within the buying range of those with very moderate incomes. But neither rationing nor unsubsidized supplementary feeding can assure adequate diets to low income families or protect them from malnutrition. If it requires more money than families can afford in order to buy the ration quota permitted each family, then many families cannot obtain their share. So we have to plan to supplement rationing with other means of supplying food. Nevertheless, when we introduce food rationing we are taking one big step toward making certain that everyone will have enough to eat and the right kinds of food.

3. MAINTAINING VARIETY AND CHOICE IN DIET

It is food shortage and poor regional distribution of supplies rather than rationing that decreases variety of foods and hence restricts range of choice.

Foods might be rationed by using a separate coupon for each food. If a consumer did not want to buy a particular food, those coupons would be valueless. Sugar and Coffee are handled in this way. If used for each of many commodities, this plan could leave little opportunity for consumers to express their individual tastes in buying foods. They could not get more of one rationed food by taking less than they were allowed of another. These limitations on consumers would come to be regarded as bureaucratic regimentation.

But point rationing, as used for canned fruits and vegetables, is quite different. Many foods are included. A person is restricted in the total quantity of the whole group of foods he may buy, but among these there is free choice. For example, if one were permitted to spend 48 points on canned goods, he might select corn, tomatoes, asparagus, and pears. Another family could make up a different combination. When meat rationing begins, no one will tell us that we must eat only liver today and only pork tomorrow. Point rationing encourages choice and in addition assists orderly and fair distribution.

Our problem now is to get this kind of rationing adopted more quickly for more foods. When we have brought a large part of our diet under rationing, we may discover that the freedom of choice allowed minimizes the feeling of deprivation and regimentation that would follow from either quantity rationing of individual foods or no rationing at all. These opportunities for choice stimulate consumers to be more ingenious in meal planning and shopping and food preparation. Also, as relief agencies were forced to recognize during the depression, some groups have distinctive diets. Flexible rationing plans will permit these groups to satisfy their long-accustomed tastes and they will be much more content. When

rationing is combined with a vigorous program of education in food selection and use, the whole experience could even lead to consumer selections of a greater variety in diets and to better use of foods than prevailed in normal years.

4. GAIN COOPERATION OF FOOD DEALERS

Attitudes of Food Dealers Are Important

The morale of dealers in all parts of the food industry is clearly of great importance to national morale. These men are an important part of our society. If they regard the rationing program as fair to them and efficient in operation, their favorable attitudes will spread quickly to others. So also will their antagonisms if the system meets their disapproval. Moreover, no rationing system utilizing the machinery of the food distribution industry can function successfully without enlisting the cooperation of the business men in all the firms of that industry. Rationing is an enormous bother to the grocer, and he should not be troubled unnecessarily by regulations which in his eyes threaten to deprive him of his right to exist. These are important reasons for enlisting business cooperation as one basic consideration in a rationing program.

Food dealers, especially retailers, share the blame with public administrators for food shortages and the annoyances of obtaining food in wartime. As a result, dealers usually wish to support rationing, except in areas of abundance. It would be poor strategy to alienate such helpful allies and drive them into the arms of the bootleggers.

In this country the small retail dealer in particular is a symbol of the "little fellow" and a stalwart supporter of opportunities for individual initiative in business. Retailing (both big and small) also remains a stronghold of many competitive practices that are beneficial to the consumer, despite many non-competitive developments. Recognition of these values in setting up rationing is important as an assur-

ance to the public that administrators are not disregarding the freedoms for which we are fighting. Grocers have the will and the machinery to serve.

These remarks are not to be read as an endorsement of all the policies or customs of food dealers; but in the particular war situation the food industry is both indispensable and favorably inclined to rationing.

It is customary to include representatives of the food processors and dealers in formulating ration systems and as members of local ration boards. In some cases the public fails to see the services that these men can render to make rationing work more advantageously to the community. Food dealers are able consultants. They need not be given authority that might be turned to their own ends. No doubt administrators may sometimes be unduly influenced by particular business interests, but criticism of officials merely on the grounds that they are working closely with dealers is quite shortsighted. The care administrators of canned goods rationing have given to minimizing the problems of retailers should be publicly recognized.

Handicaps and Inequities Among Food Retailers

Rationing regulations necessarily leave retailers considerable leeway in their treatment of customers. This discretion becomes important where supplies fail to flow smoothly so that ration claims cannot be fully met, or where some products included in a ration group are more popular than others and disappear faster. Retailers must also control their sales of scarce products which remain unrationed, and this problem is aggravated where limitations on sales of rationed items funnel consumer buying toward particular unrationed foods. The public dislikes giving dealers an opportunity to favor particular customers, and the dealers prefer not to have to make up the rules as they go along and take the resulting criticism or boycotting. The grocer's life is not an easy one.

Rationing administrators and educators have an obligation to do all that is practically feasible to relieve him of unnecessary burdens.

There is a drift of patronage toward the larger stores in order to take advantage of larger variety and the influence that a large merchant has upon the wholesaler. If the food situation becomes tight, we may follow English precedent and require customers to register with particular retailers for some types of rationed food. But even without registration the customer and the dealer tend to be bound together. For example, customers shift their purchases of unrationed foods to the stores where they buy rationed articles in order to impress the dealer with the size of their patronage in the hope that he may favor them wherever possible. There is no doubt that the small dealer fares much better with rationing than he would without it in the war situation, for he has a definite claim upon supplies. Nevertheless, small dealers are likely to find profitable operation more difficult than in normal years.

In the effort to obtain control over the flow of supplies and to simplify administration, there is a tendency to guide sales through the channels most easily regulated—if possible to “bottleneck” them at some point. Rationing administrators under such pressure may even pursue policies that result in the closing of a certain proportion of retail stores. In England, for example, it was stipulated that stores with fewer than twenty-five customers registered for a given rationed food could no longer handle that item because the cost of making up small bundles and delivering them had become prohibitive. There was also some trouble about private families setting up new stores just in order to buy at wholesale. While there was no intention to injure the small dealer, the loss of customers for rationed items was often followed by their loss for other purchases.

It is quite possible, however, to adopt special measures to protect the typical retail merchant. Payments may be

offered those who withdraw from business so that they will have re-entry capital after the war. Rationing regulations may be so constructed as to minimize the customers' tendency to seek out the larger dealers. Subsidies may be used to keep stores in operation. How vigorously this aim is pursued depends upon how important the public believes it is to maintain a large group of small businessmen.

5. EXPLAIN RATIONING TO THE PUBLIC

Public education is probably the most important goal after that of making rationing equitable by curtailing special advantages. It is placed last for emphasis. Much of the contribution of rationing to the war program is lost if the public does not see the need for it and if people cannot understand how rationing works for their benefit. If rationing is to operate smoothly, and particularly if rationing is to realize its great possibilities as a morale builder, a really gigantic publicity program is required. The beginning of such a program is not yet apparent.

Publicity, Publicity, and More Publicity

An educational program must be wide in scope as well as endlessly repetitive in detail. The whole food situation must be dramatized in simple language—preferably by cartoons. It must be described honestly, with full emphasis upon its changing character over time. Schedules of points and quotas and how one spends "point money" must be repeated over and over again, if there is to be confidence in the workability of rationing. Because customers have so far been obtaining their information from dealers is no proof that this is the best channel for education and no justification for continuing to throw the major part of this burden on the grocers.

Instructions must be phrased in the language of the street and the family, not the language of the broker or economist. People must be shown that complexity is the price of prevent-

ing loopholes, they must be convinced that the intricate ration cards were not designed by some bureaucratic Rube Goldberg.

The difficulties and the creaky joints of the system must be outlined if we wish to be sure that minor faults will not be interpreted as warnings of breakdown. The public is capable of realizing that any complex plan has imperfections and that every policy is of necessity a compromise. Explanation, not preaching, is needed. Annoyances will be cheerfully borne if attention is kept on the central purposes. If we are to prevent rationing from becoming a political football—a situation that has already threatened us in the obstructive tactics of big meat packers—the fairness and efficiency of rationing must be demonstrated to the majority of the people.

The reasons for changes in rations must be outstanding and honestly stated if suspicion is not to be aroused. When people comprehend why particular foods are put in the same point group, the satisfactions of free choice will be evident to them. When the process by which new rules are made is open and above board, then the public will not decide that special interests are dealing the cards. It is dangerous to underestimate the public's capacity for understanding. Any consumer who can drive across the continent or use the post office can understand that rationing is needed and how to use it.

Let us grant that even unlimited publicity is a poor substitute for the slow and gradual growth of custom in making new social devices work well. It is easy to overlook this learning process in our haste to condemn the errors made by administrators. The amount of instruction needed is emphasized if one imagines how difficult it would be to install the very useful post office system if it had to be launched and put in running order in a few months. There is imperative need of intensive education in the need for rationing and how it operates if success is to be achieved quickly.

A vast educational program is called for. The British have gone far beyond us, and their efforts have fallen short of the needs. So far we have made only feeble gestures toward an educational program. There is no danger that we will have too much publicity. With only a little explanation the public may conclude that rationing is another not too clever device to build "war spirit" or to keep bureaucrats busy and make them feel important.

The achievements of the Food Administration in the last war are recalled by those who contend that voluntary food sharing is sufficient without rationing. Some will remember also that unnecessary sacrifices were demanded last time. Both these attitudes reflect a failure to understand the more serious food situation today and they testify to the inadequate educational preparation for rationing. Only the explanation that convinces will correct these misunderstandings.

When there is general agreement that it is a pity any short food is left unrationed, when evasions are few, and when people see that voluntary sharing is a poor substitute for efficient rationing, then we can say that we have had good consumer education.

SUMMARY

In this section we have applied five standards of adequate rationing to our present and developing rationing system, always looking at the situation from the standpoint of the effects of rationing upon national morale. Basic to everything else is confidence among our people that everyone will be allowed his share of the available food. Next, groups with special food needs and with limited economic means for obtaining their rations must receive attention. The relation between good health and morale is an important one. Rationing programs must be elastic so that there may be freedom

of choice among foods to avoid feelings of constraint and frustration and to symbolize the continued adherence of administrators to our philosophy of freedom in personal affairs. The convenience and traditions of the food dealers must be considered insofar as compatible with the other more important criteria of effective rationing. And running through everything else is the responsibility to show the public that rationing gives them food and does not take it away, to persuade everyone that under wartime conditions rationing is consistent with democratic ideals, and to interpret to the public the policies and procedures of the rationing system.

CONCLUSIONS: FOOD RATIONING AND NATIONAL MORALE

Food rationing and public morale in wartime are closely connected. It would be utopian to rely on rationing to solve all our morale problems. It is more misleading to regard rationing as merely one more bureaucratic interference in the life of citizens busy with the job of winning a war. The picture is not so simple. Food is important, and rationing is complex. Inevitably their relationships ramify throughout the texture of the whole society. Food rationing is a major bulwark of morale. But some aspects of rationing, particularly any faults of operation, threaten morale.

Morale rests on strong foundations when equity is made a first principle of the food rationing program. It is impossible to conduct a modern war unless the citizens of each fighting nation believe they are "fighting for the welfare of the common man." A well understood and successful policy of food rationing is unmistakable evidence of national concern for the security and welfare of all. War aims then take on personal meaning.

Special rationing privileges for children appeal directly to one of our deepest humanitarian motives. This kind of attention to the welfare of the nation's families is putting our ideal of equity into practice. And equity pays big dividends

in morale. Equity makes each person's contribution significant. When the nation looks after the welfare of every family, their appreciation is expressed by cooperation. When the advantages of rationing are understood the function of daily adjustment and sacrifice becomes clearer.

The very novelty of rationing releases the energies of a large part of the population and invites people to play the game to see how the score comes out. So vast a program must be important. A considerable proportion of the people, to be sure, share the beliefs in values such as equity and efficiency, without, however, perceiving that they must personally join in the effort to realize these goals. Gradually they also realize that voluntary sharing is undependable and unfair since one cannot be sure that others are sacrificing equally and it is difficult to know what one's fair share is. We testify to the importance of our values by cooperating to carry out so new and challenging an experiment as rationing.

Rationing provides uniformity and definiteness as well as a concrete plan for action. Confusion and hesitancy die down. Orderliness and certainty furnish stable expectations of how others will act, and how you should behave. Decisions can then be made on the basis of efficiency without first conducting a private ethical debate with one's conscience. In such a settled situation one can organize his efforts so that they may best contribute to the collective enterprise.

A vista of greater democracy and security after the war is opened by the proven utility of rationing and the related programs of supplementary feeding. England's experience is eloquent on this point. The assumption that everyone is important encourages each citizen to believe that he can have some influence upon his nation's destiny. He hopes that his contribution of work and sacrifice will continue to be recognized after the war in tangible ways such as social security. The blurring of class lines under rationing encourages the belief that opportunities will remain open for

ambitious individuals. The interests of each family are one with those of other families; its welfare is the nation's. Successful co-operation in adversity trains for greater challenges and opportunities to come. We nourish our traditions of equality by sharing in wartime in order that they may serve us more abundantly in the future.

Individuals more willingly join their efforts with those of the nation when they are assured that they are partners, not tools. Sacrifice is less suffering when all share alike on a known and stable basis. Faith in the worth of sacrifices is increased by the genuine effort to share sacrifices. Striving together begets unity. In all these ways rationing helps preserve morale.

Rationing is not an unmixed benefit, however. Although many values are strengthened, others are threatened, especially by flaws in the plans or administration of rationing. If our anxieties are aroused by some of the results of rationing, we may come to question the values given as justifications for rationing. Some people may think they believe in social goals like equality but find they are unsympathetic when they observe the actual practice of treating people alike. Some Southerners will come to look upon rationing as a new and more subtle weapon to force detested ideals of racial equality upon them. Equality is all right, say some of those in all sections who live comfortably, but that does not mean that common laborers need as fine food as respectable people. "What will things be like when the war is over?" Privileged classes fear the growth in taxation and the government payroll: "Rationing is socialistic." The loyal grocer who pacifies his irritated customers must wonder if his efforts will end only in the supremacy of his bootlegging rival or the big store after the war.

Along with the undeniable appeal of novelty goes a fear of the unknown that confuses and paralyzes us. Lacking well-worn ways of acting in the new kinds of situations, we fumble.

It is difficult to foresee the results of acting as the program requires. The relation is not clear between what we want to accomplish and the present activities that are supposed to lead to that end. When we are annoyed by standing in queues, or fatigued by the greater care needed for shopping, or baffled by the problem of working out a new schedule of household tasks—the point of all the readjustments is hard to discern.

No rationing program can remove all the privileges of every favored group. The image of the well-to-do stopping by a cafe for a second breakfast with coffee dims the glory of the effort to make the family's weekly food quota stretch over seven days. If some workers receive extra food, other laborers resent the slurs on the importance of their own work.

Imperfections in rationing arouse suspicions that the officials do not know their business: "This is just another socialistic experiment." Partially justified fears that the food controls favor larger firms stir up resistance to rationing among those who are determined to hang onto our waning traditions of competitive enterprise. Exaggerated scare stories by some of these groups handicap the conscientious administrators. Even the man in the street who really benefits most from rationing may interpret the persisting privileges of the more fortunate families in a way to support his own stubborn notion that rationing takes something away from the average man in ways he cannot quite figure out.

Inefficient officials and their constantly changing regulations make many people feel as if they were in a maze without any exit. Insecurity destroys unity. And feelings of uncertainty can be easily aroused when rationing is not understood or when other families are observed to evade the rules in safety. In its milder form, this insecurity expresses itself in joining pressure groups to bring about revision of the regulations. In extreme degree, it produces evasion and bootlegging. A little evasion produces more evasion, until food distribution breaks down and social unity disintegrates.

Unless the purposes of rationing are crystal clear, many people will fail to see that rationing is really a genuine effort to apply one of our oldest democratic traditions to the war situation.

Good morale is a necessary condition of successful rationing. Efficient rationing fosters better morale. The people of the United States have the ingenuity and the good will to conduct a model experiment in food rationing.

☆ ☆ ☆

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