

NUTRITION

Rationing

Nutritionist proposes new system of rationing under which a definite portion of income would be paid in ration stamps for buying essential foods.

By DR. FRANK THONE

► DOES point rationing give you a headache? Are you bewildered and weary, trying to do your buying with what amounts to two kinds of currency that have no essential connection—pennies and points? Do you find yourself with plenty of cash to pay for something you want, only to find that you are “broke” in your other pocket, the one where you keep your ration book?

Rather common annoyances, these. If we didn't know that it is necessary for us to share certain scarce commodities with each other, and with our fighters and allies overseas, we'd consider this dual system of purchasing quite intolerable.

How would you like to have the whole business simplified by getting part of your income in ration stamps, good by themselves for the purchase of certain specified necessary foods, and the rest of your salary in cash, to spend as you please for luxuries on an unrestricted list?

Something like this is suggested as a means for seeing that the whole nation is adequately fed, by Dr. Mark Graubard, biochemist especially interested in matters of nutrition. For the duration, he is serving the government in the Food Distribution Administration, in charge of labor education in the Nutrition and Food Conservation Branch.

“There are seven general classes of foods that can be called really essential,” Dr. Graubard told me when I talked to him about his proposal. “Be-

cause of their vitamin and mineral contents, their proteins, fats and carbohydrates, everybody should regularly eat some of each class. You don't stay healthy if you neglect any one of the seven.

“Staying healthy is a duty that we owe to ourselves, and to the nation as well. The war emergency has made us realize that; and the duty to the nation will still remain when peace returns. The nation has a vested interest in the health of its citizens, a right to insist that they shall not clutter up clinics and hospitals and lose valuable production time through preventable ill health.”

“Can you give me a list of these health-keeping foods, Dr. Graubard?”

“Sure, I'll tell you. Better yet, I'll jot down typical examples.”

So here is Dr. Graubard's classified list:

1. Yellow and green vegetables.
2. Oranges, tomatoes, grapefruit, raw cabbage.
3. Salad greens, potatoes, other vegetables and fruits.
4. Milk and milk products.
5. Meat, poultry, fish, eggs.
6. Bread, flour, cereals.
7. Butter or fortified margarine.

“Now, to get proper distribution and use of these seven classes of foods, my suggestion is that each earner have, say, a fifth or a sixth of his income withheld at the source, the money going into a Food Supply Fund. In return for this, each person is to be given coupons, like ration cards, in accordance with the size of the family.

“Coupons are to be printed in seven colors, each color being good for purchase of foods in one of the seven classes, but not good outside that class, and not good for the purchase of unrationed, luxury commodities.

“The rest of the income is to be received in cash, as heretofore, and used



RATIONING FOR ABUNDANCE—An inviting lunch like this or a wholesome dinner can be available to all, but only with wise rationing.

★★★★★★★★★★★★

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in payment for clothing, housing, taxes and other non-food necessities, and for luxury foods such as candy and cake, coffee and tea, beverages, tobacco and so on.

"I think a scheme of this kind would insure the proper nutrition of everyone, would bear very lightly on each person's income, and would leave a maximum proportion for unrestricted spending."

"How would these essential foods be distributed, Dr. Graubard — through special government stores?"

"My gracious, no! Don't get this suggestion of mine mixed up with socialistic ideas. It's intended to function through the regular wholesale and retail set-up we now have, with people shopping around with their seven-colored coupons just as they now do with the combination of cash and ration books, only it would not be so complicated. Stores would continue to compete in prices, quality, service, just as they do at present. The only intervention by the state would be in the nature of currency control—and that of course is already a function of the democratic-capitalistic state in which we live."

"Just the same, Dr. Graubard, I think this idea of yours is bound to be shot at. A lot of people I know would instantly denounce it as paternalistic."

Expects Discussion

"Oh, I'm quite sure it'll be shot at. In fact, that's what I'm putting it up for: discussion, even vehement discussion, is an accepted democratic method of going over a new idea and testing its acceptability. Moreover, I haven't any conceit that I've produced anything finished and perfect, all ready to put into operation. I'd like to have other people's ideas on it.

"This is the first time I've talked for publication, but I have discussed the proposal privately with quite a number of people. Some of them just can't see it at all; others, including a good many who consider themselves quite conservative, think it's worthy of really serious consideration. Some of them point out that in addition to its primary objective of insuring adequate national nutrition it would also be a powerful aid in stabilizing business, assuring the farmer of a market for his crops. If the idea could be given international extension it should be a powerful influence for peace.

"Of course, what I've been telling you just now is only a rough outline. I'm putting it down in greater detail in a

chapter of a new book I am writing. That should enable anyone who is really interested in the idea to get a more complete view of it, which will serve as a basis for full discussion."

Science News Letter, July 3, 1943

The liver of the *swordfish* has a high vitamin A content.

Canada is the fourth largest producer of war supplies among the United Nations.

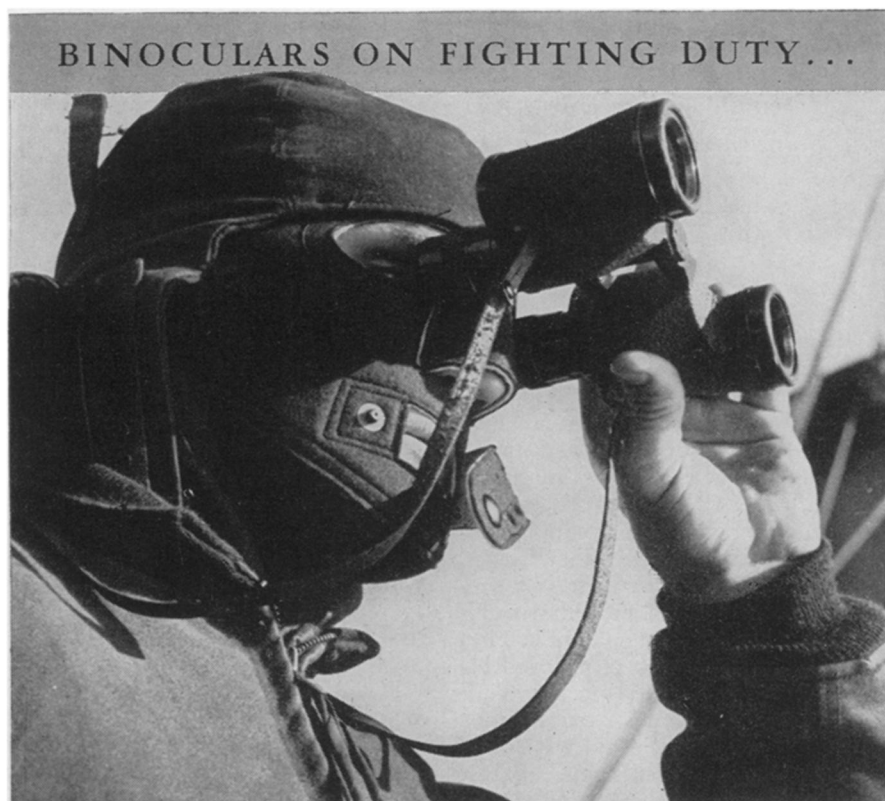
Thirty dozen *eggs* in their shells require 2.5 cubic feet of space; 30 dozen powdered eggs require .38 cubic feet.

● RADIO

Saturday, July 10, 1:30 p.m., EWT

"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. W. H. Tisdale, Pest Control Research Section of E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Co., will speak on "Agricultural Research."



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