

MAY ★ 1942

Independent Woman

STORE ROOM

"X" Marks the Morrow

an interview with
Stuart Chase

Wanted: Women Engineers

by Elsie Eaves

Our War Program

introduction by
Margaret Culkin
Banning

Rationing is Women's Job

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On Registering Women for War Service

a Symposium



Mexican novelist Margarita Orueta de Villaseñor
would put her play on Broadway—See page 140.

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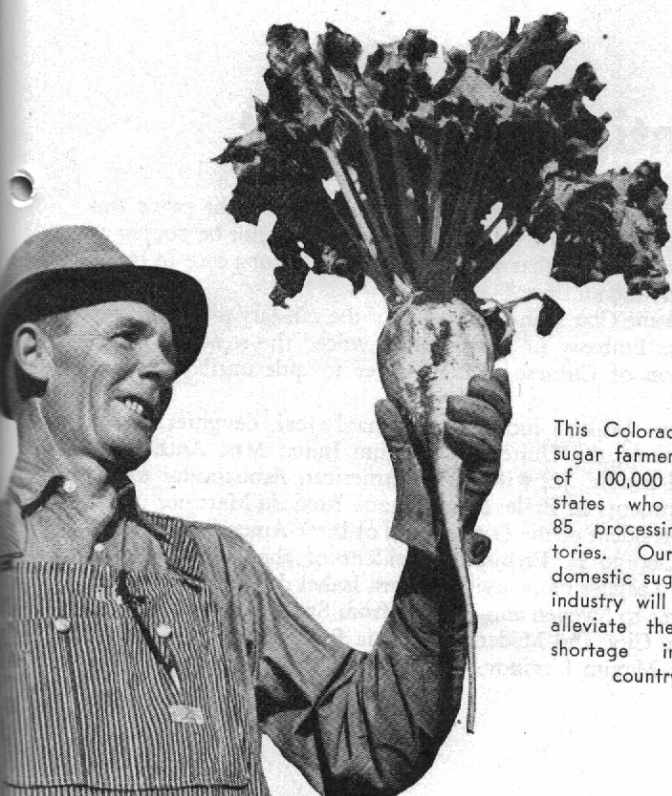
Rationing is Women's Job

by Ann Starrett

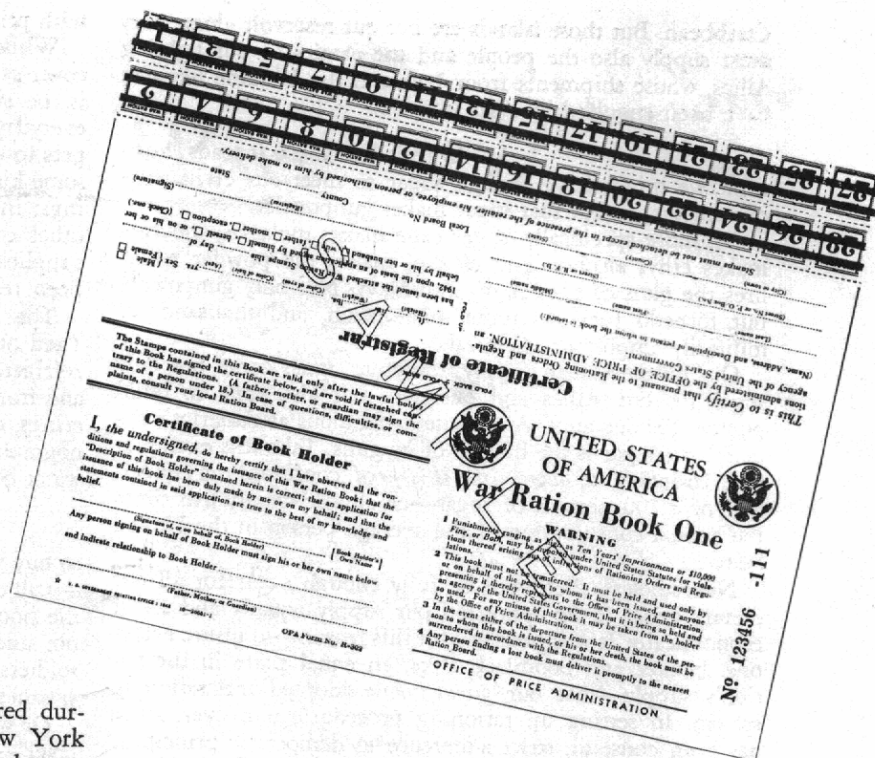
War rationing is women's job, a speaker declared during a panel discussion which prominent New York women held the other day. Women must stop the "black markets" before they begin. Women suffered a humiliating run in their national stocking last summer, when the government embargoed silk, but they learned their lesson—or so one speaker opined hopefully.

"The stocking situation," declared an important woman executive of a large New York store, morosely, "was nothing compared to what is happening right now in wool. I don't know what women think they're going to do with all the suits and coats they're buying!"

Will frantic, excessive purchases hasten the rationing of wool and other commodities as they did that of sugar? A certain grocer, who hadn't a grain to sell one day, told me: "You'd be surprised how many people come in here and brag they have 300 pounds stored away!" And thanks in no small measure to such enterprising individualists, sugar became the theme of War Ration Book One.



This Colorado beet sugar farmer is one of 100,000 in 19 states who supply 85 processing factories. Our large domestic sugar beet industry will greatly alleviate the sugar shortage in this country



Soon every American will own a copy of War Ration Book One. The subject: sugar

Despite conflicting newspaper reports, the sugar rationing will proceed as scheduled in early May—one-half pound per person per week. While it is probable that sugar stocks are greater now than estimates of two months ago indicated they would be, three factors still make rationing necessary, it is said.

First, submarine activity along the Atlantic Coast which perils the routes which sugar ships must travel to reach the refineries. This difficulty more or less offsets the unexpectedly high quantities of industrial alcohol (for conversion into smokeless powder) being made from corn and wheat. It was originally thought larger quantities of Cuban sugar would have to be devoted to this vital cause.

The second factor cited is that there is still a need to distribute the sugar supply equitably.

Thirdly, officials think that if the rationing plan were abandoned there would undoubtedly be a national stampede to hoard sugar.

Americans old enough to remember the "sugarless days" of the first World War were not surprised when the Man from Mars, disregarding for the moment everything else on the table, reached out a long hand for the sugar. But among the uninitiated there were many who puzzled over the discovery of a link between the innocent white grains in the sugar bowl and the smoke and steel of guns. Even some veterans recalled with chagrin that America had been in the last war a year and three months before sugar was rationed, whereas virtually the opening blast of America's guns in the present conflict sounded the knell of sugar abundance as usual.

One explanation of the difference is immediately evident: America's guns in World War II sounded first, not in Flanders, but among the rich cane fields of Hawaii and the Philippines. Wiped out entirely by the advance of the Japanese invaders are our abundant sugar supplies from the Philippines; cut in half by shortages of labor and shipping are the nearly one million tons we ordinarily receive from Hawaii.

There remains, of course, our largest single source of sugar—the lush cane fields of Cuba and other islands of the

Caribbean. But those islands are not our reservoir alone; they must supply also the people and the armies of our fighting Allies, whose shipments from Java and the Ukraine likewise have been engulfed by Axis invaders.

Despite all these inroads, however, we might have enough sugar to meet our civilian requirements, except that sugar makes gunpowder.

Or, more specifically, sugar cane makes molasses; molasses makes ethyl alcohol; and alcohol makes the powder which fires the guns of your Army and Navy. Not only gunpowder but torpedo fuel, dynamite, nitrocotton, and thousands of militarily important chemicals.

Out of the Cuban supply, therefore, must come not only sugar for our Allies and ourselves but also cane to build powder for our guns. And quite as fabulous as America's appetite for sugar is the hunger of its guns. Take this example: One 16-inch gun, *every time it is fired*, consumes the equivalent of 2,700 pounds of sugar—or almost twenty-five times the annual consumption of the average person in the United States.

Nevertheless, there will be fully enough sugar for all our dietary needs if we apportion our supply equally and use it economically. It was precisely for this reason—to insure everyone, banker and bootblack alike, an equal share in the nation's supply—that our government adopted the rationing system. In setting up rationing procedure, moreover, there has been constant, strict adherence to democratic principles. No wartime "star chambers" were erected. Rather did our government call upon the school teachers, symbol and backbone of a democracy, to carry out the immense job of registering the nation's 132,000,000 people.

It is interesting to remember that the British government did not impose rationing upon a reluctant public. Rather, the people demanded rationing. Why? Because cheap clothing became scarce while there continued to be plenty of expensive garments to buy. Because food was becoming too dear, and supplies would be exhausted by the time workers and people living in the country reached the shops. Hence the masses demanded that what there was be divided among the people as equitably as possible, and rationing has become one of the greatest forces toward British national unity.

The same can be true in America if we understand rationing for what it is—the best means to fair play for everyone. Rationing must go hand in hand

with price control if we are to avoid inflation.

While rationing here will doubtless not for a long time cover as many categories as are apportioned in Europe, sugar is, be sure, only the beginning. Already a wide range of everyday commodities—"from radios to salad oils, from carpets to coat hangers" as one writer put it—have fallen under some kind of wartime regulation. Some are under price ceilings; in some cases stocks have been frozen; manufacture of other commodities has been curtailed or stopped, or where supplies are limited, as in the case of tea, distribution has been regulated.

The list includes canned goods, oils, fats, cocoa, pepper (and other foods from South America or the Pacific areas), refrigerators, sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, washing and ironing machines, toasters, curlers, table grills, floor coverings, metal furniture (including bed springs), radios, phonographs, pails, lamps, bulbs, flashlights, rubber mats and hot-water bottles, metal utensils and toys. So the war world turns.

Will American women rush out to buy vast quantities of anything that promises to be scarce?—will they get, from the "black markets" or (in Americanese) the bootlegger, more of this and that than rations allow?—not understanding that by selfishness they are impaling our soldiers and sailors on the bayonets of the atrocity-minded Japanese?

Or will American women play this rationing game "on the level"—seeing it clearly for what it is, one of women's most important roles in a war game that must literally be played to the death? The sugar problem is fairly simple as yet. Literally, we'll be a healthier nation for eating less of it. And our diets will be more interesting for substituting honey, sweet fruits and the like. Furthermore, some say we'll have more sugar next year when Cuban acreages are expanded and more of the munitions needs are supplied from corn. But sugar is our testing ground today. Other and more difficult deprivations lie ahead.

American women can and will "take it." What's more, they'll "take it" with the gay gallantry of Mrs. Edna Woolman Chase, editor of *Vogue*, who at the same New York discussion mentioned at the beginning, expressed pity for the silk stock-hoarding hoarders.

"Think how demodé they're going to feel going around in their old beige legs," she said, "when black cotton stockings are all the rage!"

The Federation's International Broadcast

Representative women in England, in Washington, in Argentina, in Mexico and Canada, described women's war work, and forecast what they must do in 1942 to insure victory, when on the evening of March 29 they participated in an NBC broadcast sponsored by the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Said Margaret Culkin Banning, novelist and member of our Duluth, Minnesota, club, "We fight because we must. This war is made on women of the democracies, on their kind of homes, their kind of lives. It is a war to destroy the thinking woman and the free woman. It is a war to make us bondwomen and our children the children of bondwomen, and we shall fight that evil purpose until we win."

Vera Micheles Dean, research director of the Foreign Policy Association, said that an "important part of our activities in this war is to prepare ourselves and our children for the problems and duties of the post-war period. But the war itself is shaping the future peace. . . . One of the great weaknesses

of our education in the past was that we thought peace was easy to obtain. Now we know that peace can not be bought at bargain counters, that we must pay a price for peace in terms of economic sacrifice."

Madame Chu Shih-ming, wife of the military attaché of the Chinese Embassy in Washington, voiced the steadfast determination of Chinese women never to quit until victory is gained.

Other speakers included Krishna Bajpai, daughter of the Minister to the United States from India; Mrs. Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., wife of the American Ambassador to the Governments in Exile; Senora Anna Rosa de Martinez Guerrero, president of the Commission of Inter-American Women; Mrs. George B. Ferhison, president of the Association of Junior Leagues of America, Senora Isabel de Palencia, former Minister to Sweden and Finland from Spain, who spoke from Mexico City, and Madame Anastasia Petrova, executive secretary to Maxim Litvinov.