

FOOD RATIONING

Commitments to the United Kingdom, the needs of the armed forces, transportation and shipping difficulties have necessitated consumer rationing to ensure an equitable distribution of certain vital foods which are in short supply. Such commodities are sugar, butter, tea, coffee, preserves and evaporated milk (in certain areas), the rationing of all of which was in effect in April, 1944.

MEAT RATIONING SUSPENDED

Meat rationing and meatless Tuesdays in public eating places were temporarily suspended in Canada at the end of February, 1944.

Although Canada has always produced enough meat for domestic consumption, rationing was begun on May 27, 1943, to provide an increased exportable surplus to meet the needs of the United Kingdom and Canadian forces overseas.

Since the beginning of 1944 there had been unusually heavy marketing of all types of livestock. Marketing of hogs increased 80% over the corresponding period of 1943, cattle 50%, calves 20%, sheep and lambs 35%. As a result, transportation and cold storage facilities became heavily congested. There were 102,000,000 pounds of meat in cold storage - nearly twice as much as at the end of February, 1943.

Record quantities of meat were moved overseas in the eight weeks preceding the suspension of meat rationing, and shipping capacity had reached its limit. Thus supplies which could not be moved into export channels were released for domestic consumption through the temporary suspension of rationing in order that meat would not spoil.

The Canadian Government emphasized that meat rationing in Canada was being suspended, not abandoned, and in order to facilitate the resumption of rationing the system of slaughter permits and the requirements that all carcasses be stamped with the permit holder's license number remained in full effect.

During the suspension of rationing, however, individual farmers are permitted to slaughter their own livestock for sale directly to consumers without the previous necessity of obtaining a permit or stamping the meat sold in this way.

PRICES BOARD

The Wartime Prices and Trade Board is responsible for rationing of food. It is also responsible for holding down consumer prices. A general definition of the responsibilities of the Prices Board and of the Department of Agriculture in the matter of food follows:

The Wartime Prices and Trade Board is responsible to the minister of Finance for --

1. Maintenance of the price ceiling.
2. Estimating and defining of domestic food needs.
3. Importation and distribution of food.
4. All matters of priorities.
5. Consumer rationing of foods.

The Department of Agriculture is responsible for --

1. Production within the price ceilings established by the Prices Board.
2. Consultation with the Prices Board if the desired production cannot be obtained within the established price ceiling.
3. Recommendations to Privy Council concerning subsidies to primary producers.
4. Export of food under contract with the United Nations (except wheat for milling and flour, which is under the Department of Trade and Commerce).