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PR. Speakers Bureau

SAMPLE SPEECHES
ON
RATIONING AND PRICE-FIXING
FOR
DEFENSE COUNCIL SPEAKERS

Prepared by
Office of Civilian Defense
In Conjunction with
Office of Price Administration

This material has been prepared by the Civilian Mobilization Branch of the Office of Civilian Defense in conjunction with the Office of Price Administration for the use of local Defense Councils speakers.

The speeches relate the basic facts of gasoline and rubber rationing and price-fixing. They are not intended to be delivered as written, but are sent to all speakers as examples of the use that may be made of the correct facts given herein.

SUGGESTED TYPE OF SPEECH ON GASOLINE CONSERVATION

From the rocking chair to the automobile -- that tells the story of a national habit -- the rolling habit. We Americans are a high strung people and even when we relax, we like to keep rolling. In the last several years we found ourselves with two and a half times as many motor vehicles as all the rest of the world put together. We built new towns and extended our older ones to conform with this new means of transportation. Most of us here remember the day when Jonesville did not extend more than one mile in any direction from the railroad station. Today, some of our folks live out as far as Parkside-- six miles away.

But now we have to make adjustments in our daily lives. We can't go rolling along any longer -- just for pleasure. We have plenty of gas in our Southwest, in the West, and even gas spurting out of the sea in the Pacific Ocean off our California Coast, but we have a thousand military uses for gas. Our soldiers are scattered to the four corners of the globe -- gas must be brought to them so that they can keep their planes flying and tanks running against the enemy who seek to destroy us. Our convoy system must be maintained so that the arms may reach our boys and our Allies. This consumes enormous quantities of gas. For example, do you know that every time a destroyer goes at cruising speed 1,000 miles from its base and makes a return journey, it uses up 1,700 hundred barrels of oil. At combat speed it consumes four times as much. But it is not only the ships of our Navy, the jeeps and tanks of our Army and the planes of our Air Force which draw upon our supply. The new war plants, the converted war plants, and the expanding war plants which are making the tools with which our boys are going to win this war, devour more and more oil so that they may keep going seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. Thus are reserve oil stocks being rapidly depleted -- that is why everyone in this country must make every effort to conserve oil. Our citizens in the East are the first to feel the stringent pinch of the gas scarcity, for the East is confronted not only with the problem of the heavy war drain on our oil, but also with the problem of transportation. Many of our tankers are being sunk by the submarines and our merchant sailors, serving their country in a manner no less heroic than our boys in Bataan, are going down to the sea in their ships. Our tankers are engaged in bringing oil to the fighting fronts and so we can't afford to use them to bring oil from the fields of the West or Southwest to enable Tom, Dick and Harry to go joyriding. Tank cars -- tank trucks -- pipe line -- yes, even barges on the Great Lakes have been called into action to transport gas. But the best they can do is to carry about 50% of the petroleum needed for essential home front uses in the East.

And so the East is rationing -- the only means of ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of goods of which we don't have enough -- the only means of ensuring that doctors may be enabled to reach their patients, that farm products may reach the markets, that workers may reach the factory.

(Gasoline Conservation)

All of us, whether we are already subject to rationing, or merely asked to conserve gas now, have made up our minds to take it cheerfully. None of us will complain. We are going to learn new ways of seeking relaxation. We'll take walks instead of motor car jaunts. We'll walk to church instead of driving -- and let's just watch the diminishing waistlines of some of our friends of the fair sex! We'll pool our cars with friends and neighbors to go to work, to the store, to go any place.

Yes, we'll learn to adapt ourselves for awhile. Let's remember how the Poles, the Czechs and the Norwegians are living under the Nazi heel, and then I don't think we'll complain because we have to get out and walk for the next year, or two, or three.

And friends, let us all remember that when we have beaten those Nazis and those Japs, when we have won our right to live as free men then we can go back to our cars -- and back to our joy rides -- back to our Sunday picnics.

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and is not to be used as "canned" speech.

SUGGESTED TYPE OF SPEECH ON THE RUBBER SITUATION

The other day I was walking down Elm Street. Our distinguished Defense Council Chairman came along and stopped me. "Bill," he said, "I want you to talk at the Town Meeting for War this Saturday." "Well," I answered, "I am glad to do anything I can, but what can I talk about". "Rubber rationing -- you know a lot about that subject -- explain it to our people here in Jonesville." "Charlie," I said, "I think our people understand that situation and I don't know that they need to hear about it from me." "Well, there is some grumbling going on about it -- perhaps some people don't quite see the real issues involved."

I know we Americans like to enjoy the right to grumble occasionally but I also know that we here in Jonesville understand about the rubber rationing and that we back it up 100%. We know that we are fighting for our way of life -- fighting for the right to live our lives without benefit of Gestapo -- without benefit of military cliques. Our boys have gone from this community and every community in the land to fight for the American way of life on land, on the sea, in the air -- through out the world. They must be given the weapons with which to beat down the enemy. Their planes must have tires and self-sealing gas tanks, their guns and equipment must have tires, their anti-mine cables and life rafts must have rubber, their gas masks must have rubber. We know that the industry which supplies our boys must be fed rubber -- rubber for conveyor and drive belts, rubber for electrical insulation, rubber for tank linings for the chemical industry, rubber for fire hoses, for protective clothing, and for many other vital uses.

We ordinary citizens know further that some war workers' cars must be kept rolling to get them to their work; that buses must run to transport our people; that doctors must have tires so that they may rush to the bedsides of the sick; that fire department equipment must be kept rolling to protect us from the ordinary dangers of fire and from possible incendiary bomb fires.

And we must not forget our brave Allies, -- the British who alone in 1940 put up the fight for freedom against the savage onslaught of the Nazi air blitz; the Chinese who for five years have amazed the world by their valor and fortitude and the brilliance of their defense against the Japanese aggressor; the Russians who since June 1941 have astonished the world by their magnificent defense of their homeland against the Nazi attackers. These people too must be supplied with rubber to keep their military machines rolling and their home fronts going.

(Rubber Rationing)

When I tell you that 98% of our rubber came from the Far East, that we are not going to get any more rubber from there until we have won freedom for that territory by armed might, and then have reforested the devastated rubber plantations, then you will know that unless you are eligible for replacements under rationing, you have on your car the only tires you are going to get until we shall have won this war. When I tell you that only by cutting down the recently revised estimates for military and civilian uses of rubber for ourselves and our Allies by another 25%; that only by performing the miracle, which we Americans alone may perhaps be able to perform, -- stepping up synthetic rubber production from 25,000 tons this year to 600,000 tons in 1944, may we hope to end that year without a complete failure of our rubber supply -- when I tell you this, then I know that you will agree with me that if there is not enough rubber for our civilian uses, and for our boys and the boys of our United Nations friends, then our boys and our friends' boys shall have the rubber they need and we shall do without.

Who would dare to compare in intensity of sacrifice -- being asked to keep his speed below forty miles per hour -- being asked to double up with friends or to use public transportation, or being asked to watch his tires carefully, or being asked to save every scrap of rubber for the salvage campaign -- who is there who will compare that sacrifice with the heroic struggle that our soldiers have gone forth to face on the battle fronts so that we and our children may continue to live as free men, may continue to live as a nation which exemplifies all that is highest and noblest in our civilization.

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SUGGESTED TYPE OF SPEECH ON GASOLINE RATIONING

From Basra in Iraq to Australia stretch 5,000 miles of tropical seas. Between Los Angeles harbor and Australia lie 7,000 miles of Pacific waters. Beneath the surface of these waters lurk our enemy's death-dealing submarines. For four months at a stretch our tankers must ply these seas to carry oil to our troops in Australia, since that Continent no longer can get oil from her Indies neighbors.

Fellow Americans, it is because of this situation, that we must accept rationing of gas. The tankers which once left Gulf Coast ports every eighty minutes to carry oil for our cars, are now in our front battle lines, carrying the oil that the boys from this town and every other town in the United States, who are now in Australia, need in order to wrest from the Japs their ill-gotten gains. We don't even have to go as far afield to understand the need which the Army has for gasoline. The training of just one pilot takes 12,500 gallons which is enough gas to keep our car going for twenty years. Or take the matter of inter-ceptor flights, hundreds of which are made every day for our protection. They usually last at least two hours and nine to eighteen planes generally partake. Each plane uses 60 to 70 gallons of 110-octane gas every hour on one of these flights. Or let us remember, that the Army Air Force must keep large amounts of reserve stocks so that in the event of an attack by air, planes can be de-centralized from their landing bases and fly from emergency fields, each of which must have a large supply of gas.

Some of our well-meaning autoist friends complain. They tell us, "We know all about the tremendous military need for gas, but why doesn't the Government see to it that our oil is brought to us some other way than by tankers?" My friends and neighbors, our Government is doing everything possible. Two oil pipe lines have been built -- barges, to bring oil to us through our inland waterways are being built as far as our war program allows. Remember, these barges must be built of steel since wood barges would take fire easily. Steel today is a metal more precious than gold. It is with bullets, and tanks and torpedoes of steel that we will defeat the totalitarian enemy. No civilian claim for steel must take precedence over the supply our men must have to gain the inevitable triumph for Democracy.

How about our railroads -- certainly, they could carry the oil to us? I need hardly tell you that these railroads today are overtaxed carrying guns and tanks and munitions to our ports, there to be shipped to our armies and the armies of our United Nations' friends. We dare not load these railroads further.

The Army Quartermaster Corps itself is doing everything possible to cut down on their own uses of gasoline. In a sense, they are rationing, too. If they can do without, there is no one in this audience who can be unwilling to cut out all unnecessary driving. By so doing we are making an important contribution to the victory effort. By keeping off the roads, friends, we are helping to ensure that our country will that much sooner go down the glorious road to victory.

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SUGGESTED TYPE OF SPEECH ON PRICE FIXING

This is a message about the war and the new part you are going to play in it.

What I have to say concerns your safety and protection just as much as air raid precautions or first aid.

The President and Washington have recently announced a fight against higher costs of living, a fight that will be waged on many fronts. It is a fight for what we eat and what we wear, a fight on the home front which you must help. To help you must understand the steps all of us together are taking.

Inflation is nothing but a fancy term for rising prices. It is a complicated subject when professors start talking about it but it is simple for you and me. In inflation we pay more and we get less, prices go up and quality and quantity come down. It may start comfortably with more money in your pocket but it winds up with poverty and destruction of most of the values we Americans live by.

If we were to follow the experiences of the last war, a family with an income of \$1600 a year would have to have \$4000 -- two and one half times as much money -- just to keep even with itself and its way of life. That's what inflation can be and that's what we don't want now.

How are we going to fight it?

The President named our weapons a short time ago: stabilization of wages; rationing of scarce commodities so all of us get our proper share; restricting installment credit and using our money instead to buy war bonds; higher taxes and finally a price ceiling on most things we eat, use or wear, a ceiling to protect the manufacturer, the wholesaler, the retailer and you and me from the terrible impact of the inflation spiral.

Of all these means, the price-ceiling is where you and I come into the picture first because a price ceiling at once affects consumers. We're all consumers. I hope some of you here tonight are also retailers -- and wholesalers and manufacturers too -- but particularly retailers, because retailers are the important front line men in this special new part of our home front war. Maybe you hadn't thought of the drugstore around the corner or the department store downtown as part of your war program. Well, they are and their job is going to be a difficult one. And you've got to give them all your help and backing, so they in turn can help you.

(Price Fixing)

In general, what we buy can be priced no higher than the highest price charged in March in the same stores. Not all stores charge the same prices, but no store may charge more than it did last March. Prices can be lower than the ceiling, but not higher so there is still a basis for plenty of price competition. Stores publicly display ceiling prices for their "Cost of living" items, but not for all items.

Certain services are likewise included in the ceiling. They are those which add to the value or use of a commodity: for instance dry cleaning, auto repairing, laundries and tailors. But the ceiling over retail services does not go into effect until July 1.

Not everything comes under them -- newspapers and movies don't -- nor do antique furniture and jewelry have ceilings but they won't worry us much.

What is likely to be confusing is that some things we eat are not controlled and others are. Milk and cream at retail have a ceiling. Evaporated milk, eggs, poultry and butter do not have one. That's because of existing laws and administrative problems. Fresh fruits and vegetables have no retail ceiling -- nor have dried prunes -- but other dried fruits do.

Nearly everything else we live by is going to be established in millions of things, including rent in most parts of this section.

Now let's get this straight -- For the rest of the war you'll pay what you did last March -- maybe less, but not more.

Price control is a protection against a higher cost of living. Rationing, as in sugar, is an insurance that everyone in your house will get his share. Rationing is the opposite of hoarding. Hoarding helps Hitler. Hoarding boosts prices for speculators and profiteers. Hoarding in the home means that machinery, trains, boats, trucks and ships at sea, have to stop working on war needs for our soldiers, to bring you an extra bag of sugar or box of sardines that you're not entitled to anyhow. We must get it through our heads that overflowing pantries may mean empty guns. Tell this to yourself, tell it to your family, tell it to your neighbors.

News experts, radio commentators, economists and up-to-the-minute historians are already sure that if the men who sell - and that means some of you here tonight -- and the general public -- and that's certainly all of us -- will each and everyone do his, her and our part, inflation can be licked. Keep the dollars under control!

We're asking you to think this out, talk about it, understand it. Above all, we want you to let the stores where you trade know you're going to help them make this thing work. Tell them you're behind them, tell them we are all together -- government, retailers and public -- and that together we can win the fight against high prices. This is a battle, too, and we can win it.