AFTER HAVING BEEN a member of the rationing staff of the Office of Price Administration (OPA) for about three and one-half years, it occurred to me late in 1945 that a rather intimate, "inside" account of how the rationing rules evolved would be valuable to students of administration. Consequently, I disassociated myself from OPA late in 1945 and, with the aid of a grant from the Social Science Research Council, began gathering and sorting the materials and memories which have resulted in this book.

My objective from the outset was to describe those aspects of rationing rule-making which would have universal applicability, or which would have interest and utility to all administrative officials—not just to rationing officials. Consequently, I carefully avoided doing a history of rationing or a sheer description of rationing mechanics. However, a person reading the book will acquire before he is through a fairly thorough knowledge of rationing mechanics as well as some rationing history.

To keep the project within feasible limits I made no attempt to study or discuss OPA field administration and field personnel. This book is concerned almost entirely with the rationing planning process in Washington and the methods by which the resulting plans were communicated to those concerned. All references to rationing personnel are to Washington office personnel unless the contrary is explicitly stated. Field behavior comes into the picture only occasionally as an indication of the results of some Washington decision.

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