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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

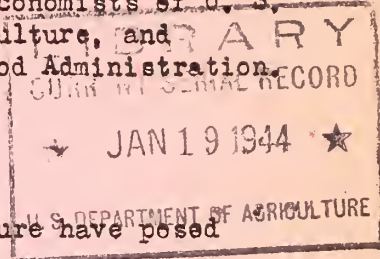
Tuesday, January 25, 1944.

QUESTION BOX

Lay pattern with straight of cloth?
How remove cream stain?
How buy pressure canner?

ANSWERS FROM home economists of U. S.
Department of Agriculture, and
officials of War Food Administration.

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Homemakers writing in to the U. S. Department of Agriculture have posed

quite a variety of questions for the "experts" today. Answers come from clothing and textile specialists, and from officials of the War Food Administration. Let's start right off with a question that's probably occurred to many women who are making clothes at home these days. Here's the letter:

"I've noticed that instructions that come with dress patterns usually say to lay the pattern 'with the straight of the cloth.' Can you tell me what this means, and why it is necessary?"

If you cut a garment incorrectly with respect to the straight of the goods, the material will pull, and the garment won't hang right or fit right, and it won't hold its shape well.

Here's how the clothing specialists explain what is meant by the term "straight of the cloth." Every piece of woven cloth is made of yarns. These yarns run lengthwise and crosswise, and are woven so they meet at right angles.

When you lay a pattern with the straight of the cloth, you place it so the lengthwise and crosswise yarns of the material will run true and straight in the finished garment. It's important, too, that you turn the pattern the right way -- that is, in the finished garment the lengthwise yarns ordinarily should hang truly vertical at center front and back. Markings on the pattern -- usually a straight line or two perforated holes -- show you the direction the lengthwise yarns should take. Place the pattern on the goods so that these marks run



parallel with the lengthwise yarns of the goods. The selvage will often help you keep to the straight of the goods. You can measure from the guide lines on the pattern out to the selvage, to see that the pattern is laid right.

Some patterns may instruct you to lay small pieces of the pattern on the crosswise yarn of the material, rather than lengthwise. But do this only if the pattern advises it.

Sometimes you may be tempted to turn a piece of your pattern ever so slightly on the grain of the goods in order to cut it out without piecing. But the clothing specialists warn against this. It's better to piece your material, and have a well-fitting garment, than to have sections of your dress twist and hang badly.

Well, that answers our pattern letter. Now for the next question:

"I spilled cream on an ecru colored linen tablecloth. The cream has left a stain that won't come out with ordinary soap-and-water laundering. What can I do to get the stain out?"

If the cream stain hasn't come out in laundering, the textile experts suggest that you try removing it with carbon tetrachloride. Lay the tablecloth wrong side up on a pad of soft cloth, and sponge the stain with the carbon tetrachloride. If it's the grease that is responsible for the stain, this treatment will probably remove it.

But if this doesn't do the job, perhaps the stain is caused by some other substance in the cream, such as the protein, rather than by grease. In that case, try pepsin -- a stain softener that you can buy at any drug store. Be sure the cloth is free from soap. Sponge the stain with cold water, then sprinkle the pepsin on the dampened stain, and let it stand half an hour. Brush it off, and rinse the spot well.

And now for our last letter in the mailbag for today. This writer says, "I couldn't buy a pressure canner last summer, and so I didn't do a lot of canning I otherwise would have done. This year I don't want to get caught short again, so I'm writing in early, to ask how to go about applying for a certificate to buy a pressure canner."

About the first of the year, the War Food Administration lifted the rationing restrictions on pressure canners, so you don't need permission to buy one, provided you intend to use it for food preservation.

War Food officials think we'll probably have enough canners for purposes of food preservation, and that's why rationing has been lifted. Last year more than 300,000 canners were made. This year materials have been allocated for 400,000, and the indications are that a large part of these will be ready for spring and early summer canning.

If you want to buy a pressure canner, all you have to do is tell your dealer you're going to use it for food preservation. You don't have to fill out any forms.

However, it's still necessary to get permission to buy a pressure canner for what the War Food officials call "non-food preservation uses." If you're wondering what that expression means -- it refers to such things as sterilizing. In other words, even though we have a good supply of canners -- or will have, when the new ones are made -- it's important to make sure that the canners will be used chiefly for canning.

