



WOULD COUPONS BE FAIRER?

Views On Rationing — And Friday Night Shopping



Town Girl

"I DO think it would be much fairer to have some sort of rationing scheme for hard-to-obtain groceries. It doesn't affect me very closely because I board, although I notice my landlady looks at me in a pathetic way when I put two teaspoons of sugar in my tea, and that we always have tinned jam on the table instead of home-made. I think every woman in charge of a house should be entitled to a fixed amount of sugar in proportion to the number she has to cater for.

"Suppose coupons were issued for stockings, could one give them away like petrol coupons? My boy-friend's in Canada and sends me on the average a pair a week.

"And it doesn't worry me about Friday nights, either. I do all the shopping I want in my lunch hour, or for half-an-hour after work.

BELIEVING as I do in the Jungle Law and the Survival of the Fittest and Catch as Catch Can and the Devil Take the Hindmost, I am myself not particularly interested in coupons for sugar, silk stockings, wool, water cracker biscuits, or even vegetable extract. It's an easy matter for people like me who work in a building overlooking the main street to do a shop-crawl every lunch-hour and glean anything that's worth gleaning, and anyway I'm sure that if anybody gave me a sheet of coupons I'd put it by mistake in the Clean W.P.B. So when it was suggested that I should write something about coupons I was greatly interested until my attention was drawn to the plight of the suburban housewife with a young family, for whom shop-crawling is of necessity a forsaken pleasure. Then my heart was touched and I determined to lend the weight of my pen to the Case For Coupons.

I began by getting in touch with a number of persons in various walks of life to whom I proposed to put the questions "Would Coupons Be Fairer?" But my question got somewhat tangled up with subsidiary queries about early closing on Fridays and should husbands stay home and mind the children. I present herewith some selected answers in my small-scale Gallup Poll. (After I had secured all these opinions, a scheme of ration-coupons for sugar was actually announced. But while this affects the issue, it probably doesn't affect the opinions).—M.B.

"And if it's something that requires hours of deliberation like shoes or an evening frock, there's always Saturday mornings."

Suburban Housewife

"I DO think coupons would be fairer.

My grocer gives me only two pounds of sugar a week, and it really isn't enough if you want to make jam or anything. And I haven't time to go from shop to shop getting an extra pound here and there, and it's impossible for me to get into town unless my husband can stay home and mind the

children. That's why I have to do all my town shopping on Friday nights, so I'm hoping they won't decide to abolish Friday late night completely. I'm far too busy on Saturday mornings to go into town, and anyway after this my husband will be working Saturday mornings and I'll have to stay home with the children anyway."

Another Housewife

"I DON'T like the coupon idea. I've got a wonderful system at the moment—I ring up my husband in town and tell him I've heard there's some wool at R——'s or could he possibly bring home an extra pound of sugar as I can't get any from the grocer. You've no idea what a saving it is in the house-keeping money."

Mother of Two

"I DON'T think it necessary for shops to have a late closing night. I know that at present a number of women with young children have to do their shopping then, but I think this difficulty could be got over fairly easily if we organised a system of minders. Surely a group of mothers could get together and take it in turns to mind the collective offspring? That would give mothers plenty of leisure to come into town to do their shopping on week-days and garner a skein of wool here and a pair of stockings there, to say nothing of an extra half-pound of tea. But I'm in favour of coupons. If things we are short of were rationed the housewife wouldn't need to waste her day in town trekking from shop to shop, asking the eternal question about stockings, or wool, but might be able to spare a quarter-of-an-hour before five o'clock for a quiet cup of tea with her friends."

Shopgirl

"I DON'T care two hoots about coupons — I work at a stocking counter and I manage all right. But I think it's marvellous abolishing late night on Friday. Of course I guess I'll be pretty tired if we have to work till six o'clock the other nights, but it will be worth it to get an extra evening to myself. You see I've got Red Cross two nights a week and I always go dancing on Saturdays, and if I don't work

Fridays it will leave a possible three nights for going to the pictures, won't it?"

Domestic Help

"I DO the shopping for the family, and they all take sugar in their tea and they're all very fond of jam tart. We need quite a lot of sugar one way and an-

other, more than our own grocer gives us, and it means I have to go from shop to shop. I don't really like doing it—it seems rather unfair when you think of all the poor souls who just have to manage on much less than we get. I found a greengrocer's the other day where they let you have pound for pound of sugar when you're buying fruit for jam, so we managed most of our jam-making and bottling all right, but then the family went blackberrying last Saturday and so I had to go looking round for sugar again. I don't mind if they do close on Friday nights because I do all my shopping on my day off. And I think it's such a good thing for all these girls in shops. Most of them are quite young and I don't think it's quite nice for them to have to come home late from work now that there's a blackout."

She Runs a Dairy

"A SHOP like this is such a tie because we're open every night and part of Sunday afternoon. I used to have a young girl to help me but she's gone to work in a clothing factory, and since she left the only time I can get off to do my own shopping is Friday night, because my husband is home then and minds the shop. But now he's just started working a 58-hour week and I can't get away even on Friday nights, so it doesn't make any difference to me if the shops don't stay open then.

Works in the Suburbs

"I'M all for abolishing late shopping night in the suburbs but not in town. You see I work in a shop myself and it is more or less only during my annual holiday that I get a chance to do some town shopping. But what with not buying myself any new clothes since I started working out here, I've saved quite a bit of money, and out here there's no inducement to spend it on anything except perhaps Bonds for Bombers. No, I don't think I do need any coupons, even for stockings. I've been called up in this first age group so I suppose I'll be drafted to the W.A.A.F., and have grey lisle ones provided free of charge."



No man would like to think that his widow, some day, might be forced to ask others for help.

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Nor is it a difficult one. The Public Trust Office will be pleased to explain to you what steps you should take—to make or revise a will, and to appoint an executor or trustee.

The PUBLIC TRUSTEE

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