

NOVEMBER 16, 1978

Mr. Carter was right, I think, for coming out against inflation and making moves to strengthen the dollar. From the way the news sounded from overseas, the slant eyes were about to start running bushel basket specials on greenbacks. Europeans, so it looked were going to use our money to stuff up the cracks in their houses for the winter.

Over here the consumer was howling so loud that the cash register bells were inaudible. In the supermarkets in San Angelo, old gals who hadn't has a strand of straight hair in 40 years were throwing curlers like horses lose their shoes in the rocks.

It was terrible experience to go shopping. Well mannered matrons would deliberately aim their shopping carts at stray kids wandering in the aisles. I came close to loosing a boot heel in a store that's patronized by country club members. Checkers girls that could stand the pressure were mighty seasoned hands. Inflation is a fierce business and so are the victims.

I found out right off that the voluntary control suggested by the President wasn't going to work. Some time ago, like summer before last, I'd borrowed five cans of beer from one of Child Who Sit in the Sun's cronies to bake some biscuits. I think I told you part of the story once before. How tricky it is to convert cans into cups and how tedious it is to drink the foam off the measuring pitcher without spilling beer on your polling pin. I don't remember how far I went into the story. I was going to start baking bread for the old folks around town. All I was going to ask was for someone to furnish the beer.

Anyway, the loan aged a lot faster than I thought it had. Several times, she casually and uncasually mentioned in a subtle and unsubtle way that she'd like to be paid off. Nasty jibes. You know: "I guess the old people are having to buy lots of molasses and butter, now that Monte is cooking them so many hot biscuits." Or, "I suppose Betty Crocker is going to have to sell out, since there's a home bakery here in Mertzon."

So when Mr. Carter said what he did and she said what she did about 400 times, I decided to settle the debt.

The price index on beer for the summer of 1976 compared to 1978 showed that five cans had shrunk to 3.45 cans. I didn't want to cut a can in fractions; thus to end the deal, I just took that Mrs. busy pocketbook a full four cans of beer.

I never did get to explain that I was following Carter's plan. I thought the citizens were ready to cooperate. It wasn't a mystery any longer why her old man took steps like a marathon walker. These modern day kids just think they know the definition of cool.

The President claims he understands our problems. Perhaps his brother Billie could help him along some lines. Next time I start to help the old folks, I'm going it alone. The economy, national and international, is a complicated matter, but things can get rocky right here at home.