

OPERATION "LARDER"

SIR BEN SMITH

I am a man of the people. What I have had to say has no doubt been a great blow to you. You all know by now the difficult food problem. It is part of a world problem, and we are part of the World. We are an importing country and like all other importing countries have to obtain our supplies from overseas, therefore, for a time we must go short.

MISS MURIEL
GEORGE

Sir Ben Smith says we've got to go short. That's what housewives have been doing for six long years. Toast and dried egg breakfasts aren't much to shout about but now even they're going. Honestly, I'm beginning to dread each new day. I get up wondering what I'm going to give the boys to eat and the stuff I have to put in front of their father, doesn't bear thinking about. I did hope we might have it a bit easier now that there's no more war. But instead of that, it's worse. Just when we're getting used to a bit of white bread, back we have to go to wartime loaves.

I wonder if the men realise what running a house means nowadays. You can't really know till you've tried it. And now we're sick of it, sick of the queues, and ration books and square inch packets of fats. We're crying out against this stretching of the lean fare of wartime. It's the wives and mothers every time when it's a case of doing without. And this last cruel cut on our larders is the hardest one of all. We've had six years of thinking of essential food in terms of ounces - so perhaps it's not unreasonable that we should think about those places overseas where there seems to be plenty of nearly everything. And here's another thing - restaurants. Rationing's all right if you've got the time and the money to have your meals out. Why no ration tickets for lunches, and to give the ordinary housewife a bit more? So there you are Sir Ben Smith, that's what the housewife thinks.

COMMENTATOR

Why has this bombshell fallen? Why less fats and the war-grey loaf? Here's why. There's a shortage of grain throughout the world - grain and many other staple foods. Here are the world's food headlines. Grain crops in Australasia crippled by drought; storms clamp down on the whaling season, reducing supply of fats for margarine; European food-producing lands still suffering from war's aftermath. Ministry of Agriculture tells farmers; "It may be worse than in war." And in the east, where millions of lives depend on the year's rice crop, it's the same terrible story. Rice means life to these people. That is why Britain stands down and says "We will take no rice this year." For we are stronger than the people who live in dread of famine. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and America have promised to produce their utmost to send to Europe. Britain has decided their need is greater than ours.

It's worth bearing in mind. Other countries are also involved in these cuts. This is a serious thing for the world. We have made our appeal abroad and to the farmers. I also make my appeal, do your utmost to give us the food we need in this country, and to you the people I would say, do not waste food, this is an anti-social act. Preserve everything you can, but waste is a crime.