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homemakers' chat

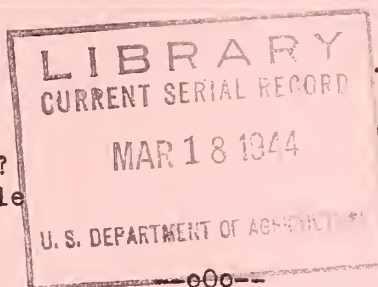
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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, March 23, 1944.

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In 3 Hb
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QUESTION BOX:

Why Use tokens first?
Ration Book #3 needed still?
Why endorse gasoline coupons?
How freshen chairs with little
materials?



ANSWERS FROM:

OPA officials and home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

Questions about rationing are still coming in, and today we have several typical ones, which OPA officials have answered for us. And there's a question about freshening up some chairs inexpensively. The home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture have some good suggestions on that. But first let's clear up some of the troublesome questions on rationing. The first homemaker says:

"Why are we asked to use up our ration tokens before we tear out more stamps from our Ration Book Number Four?"

OPA officials explain that anyone who hoards tokens instead of using them promptly to keep them moving may cause a local shortage of the foods for which you have to use ration stamps. It workes out this way:

There is only a limited supply of ration tokens. If consumers pay out stamps and hoard tokens, the storekeeper will soon have none with which to make change. He will have to get more from a bank. But to obtain more tokens, he must use up his own points. A retailer has a certain number of points to his credit. This is called his "inventory" of points. The only way he can get food to stock his store is to give stamps to the wholesaler. If he has to use his points to obtain more tokens, he has fewer points to buy food for his customers.

In a short time the store will have less food than usual, and some customers won't be able to get their share. If all the stores in your area have customers who hoard tokens instead of spending them, there might be a general scarcity of the foods you would like to buy.

So the OPA says: "Share and play square. Use up your tokens before you tear out stamps. Keep the tokens moving."

Now for a question about ration books. "I heard some one say the other day that we won't need Ration Book #3 any more now that we have the new system and use tokens with Ration Book #4. Shall I just throw Ration Book #3 away?"

No, indeed! Keep Ration Book #3, by all means! What you heard was only partly right. You won't need Ration Book #3 to buy food, but you will need it to buy shoes, and anything else that might have to be rationed in the future. Right now airplane stamp #1 in Ration Book #3 is good for a pair of shoes indefinitely.

Next we have a question about gasoline rationing. "It seems a lot of trouble to have to endorse every single gasoline coupon in my book and write down the number of my license plate and state every time. Why isn't it enough just to have my signature on the book?"

The OPA officials say that in the country-wide effort to stamp out the black market in gasoline, it is necessary for every one to cooperate. And one way of cooperating is to endorse every coupon the minute you get the book. Then if your book should be lost or stolen, no one else could get any gasoline on your coupons. This protects you, and also the honest gasoline dealer, and if everyone complies the black market will soon be stamped out.

Let's turn now to a house-furnishing question. "I would like to freshen my dining-room chairs, also some other straight chairs, but find that new slip covers would take a good deal of yardage and cost more than I ought to spend. How can I brighten up these chairs without spending very much?"

Perhaps you could make some bright-colored pads for the seats and backs. If your chairs are made of very beautiful wood, or if they are part of a period scheme of furnishing, you would not want to paint them, but you could use the pads to bring color into the room without hurting the chairs at all. Actually pads would protect the fine wood.

On the other hand, if the chairs are not especially interesting or valuable in themselves, one of the least expensive ways to freshen them is to paint them any color that harmonizes with other colors in the room. And you may wish to use pads and back covers, too.

Sometimes dining-room chairs have boxed seats. With that kind, home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture suggest that you could make fitted covers for the boxed part. You do this just as you would make a boxed cushion cover. A short pleated valance is effective on this type of seat cover. A placket with two or three snaps at each back post will keep a boxed cover in place.

Perhaps you have straight, simple chairs with wooden seats---the kind that are often used in a dining-room or dinette, or around a card table or in a bedroom. If so, you could make thin pads for the rather hard seats, of any color you like, and put another pad on the back of the chair to protect dresses, especially in hot weather. To make these seat pads, simply cut several thicknesses of cotton batting the exact shape of the chair seat but half an inch smaller on all sides. Be careful not to make the pads too thick. Put the layers of cotton between layers of cheesecloth and baste twice each way and around each outside edge to keep the cotton from knotting when the pads are laundered. Then make an outside cover which is merely a slip to snap on over the pad. To save material you may use unbleached muslin or good parts of an old sheet for the under side of the pads, but then they can't be turned over. Make tapes of the slip material to attach the pad to the chair posts, arranging them to snap underneath the pad.

If you use a back pad, arrange it in a similar way to snap on and off with tapes. On square-backed chairs, instead of a pad, you can make a short bag-like cover to slip over the back to protect both the clothing and the chairs. Finish the bottom with washable braid or a hem.

