

DEFENSE OF STORE GRINDING

Manufacturer Comments on Article Published in March Issue of this Paper and States the Case for Store Coffee Mills

L. G. ROBBINS of the Royal Electric Fixture Corp., Hornell, N. Y., manufacturer of electric coffee mills, takes issue with B. D. Balart in connection with some of the latter's statements in the course of an article entitled "Store Versus Factory Coffee Grinding," published in the March issue of this paper. "The article," says Mr. Robbins, "seems to be a selling talk for package coffee and it infers that the consumer cannot get complete coffee satisfaction from bulk coffee ground in the store."

"Investigation of the subject," he continues, "would undoubtedly convince Mr. Balart that many of the larger chains, to say nothing of a multitude of independent merchants, are selling very large quantities of their own brands, ground in the store and in many instances of independent merchants also roasted in the store. It is a little more trouble to sell coffee in this way, so it may be assumed that there is a good sized demand and an ample profit, otherwise all would sell canned coffee."

"One of the points Mr. Balart makes against the store grind is the lack of uniformity or the uncertainty of obtaining the proper grind for the various types of coffee making. Most housewives know what kind of grind is needed for the special method of coffee making used, and if the unlucky merchant who falls down on this does not hear about it—and this in plenty—then we do not know the typical American housewife. The wrong grind will bring the pound of coffee back to the store in a hurry and means two deliveries instead of one, so trust the merchant to give the proper grind."

"Of course Mr. Balart admits in his article the advantages of the store grind, but he says it is impossible to realize on these advantages because of imperfect equipment, pinning the blame on both the merchant and the coffee mill manufacturer. Certainly there is a woeful lack of realization on the part of the average merchant that his electric coffee mill should be an important part of his coffee department, should be kept bright and shining and in good mechanical condition. However, there are enough specialty salesmen traveling about the country looking for orders so that few merchants can have shabby old mills very long without having the matter called to their attention and being "boned" to trade in the old machine toward a new and up-to-date one. In ordinary times few can resist the pressure.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NEW BUHRS

"Even in these times, Mr. Balart would be surprised if he would 'sit in' with the replacement

department manager of any electric coffee mill manufacturer and watch the volume of orders for new buhrs or grinding parts. One big chain, so a manufacturer said a short time ago, recently ordered two thousand sets of buhrs in order to equip all of a certain type of mill used in its stores to turn out three uniform grinds. In another plant, well known to the writer, orders for fifty to one hundred and fifty sets for one chain are not uncommon, while the orders from various customers for from one to several sets flow in with great regularity. New buhrs are as essential from time to time as new butcher knives, cash register tape, etc., and if buhrs are renewed as needed there is no reason why store mills should not turn out work that is at least acceptable and will result in as good coffee as any canned coffee on the market.

"Reference is made in Mr. Balart's article to the chaff that may be dumped on top of the coffee when it is poured into a bag." He says that the clerk taps the receiving can on some object to loosen all the coffee and the chaff on top is the result. Probably he has not realized that the best recipe for avoiding this is not to tap. This results in the chaff remaining in the receiver and later it can be deposited in a box reserved for the purpose.

"To sum up, it is felt that Mr. Balart has made out a good case for the so-called store grind, if he had left off the 'ifs.' Possibly the foregoing may show that the ifs are not so bad as painted and that the objections to the store grind either do not exist or may be easily overcome. Certain it is that thousands of merchants recognize the benefits of the store grind and appreciate the extra profits that come from the carefully supervised sale of bulk coffee, or coffee fresh roasted in the store or elsewhere and ground to suit each customer. If it were not so, the dozen or more manufacturers now making and selling store electric coffee mills would soon be out of business."

BRAZIL COFFEE DESTRUCTION

Evidence that Brazil had again accelerated her coffee destruction program was confirmed by advices to the New York Coffee and Sugar Exchange which disclosed that during May 1,104,000 bags were burned. During the first four months of the year only 968,000 bags had been destroyed, a sharp decrease from the rate during 1933. Not since November of last year has the monthly total exceeded one million bags. Since the beginning of the destruction plan in June, 1931, 27,914,000 bags have been burned or otherwise destroyed. Previous advices from Brazil predicted that on July 1, 1934, the start of the crop year, excess stocks in Brazil will have been reduced to a normal figure after four years of effort.

Calcutta cables advise of strong demand and advancing prices for all low and medium grade teas.