

THAT PAY ★ ENVELOPE

SHOULD HUSBANDS HAND IT OVER?



By MARION WELLS

VARIOUS polls have been taken on this important question, and strangely enough the verdict is usually about 50-50. I say strangely, because who can imagine a husband giving up his pay envelope willingly? But no doubt those husbands who consent are those who have been through the mill trying to pay the bills themselves and have given up in despair. But I am a wife, and a good manager, and I definitely say yes.

But this intact idea is somewhat in the nature of a fallacy. For the first calls that come on it are his. He must have 5/- for his tram fare, as we live a fair distance out—our friends tell us we are lucky to live anywhere, so we don't complain about this. Then 6/- for smokes. He says this is the least any man could get along with, and having experienced his bad temper when he once missed out on his ration, I don't argue about that. Then 6/- for liquid refreshment—Social Obligation he calls it. Then as I like him to be able to take me out at least one night a week another 5/- must come out for that (our names don't appear in the social columns).

One Sunday I was seated in church next to a well-dressed young man, and as I passed the plate to him, he dropped a penny into it. It occurred to me that the wife might keep him a bit short, so I there and then decided to add another shilling to my husband's allowance for church. I then discontinued putting my sixpence in, as I don't mind standing aside in cases like that.

And he must have 2/- weekly for barbering and matches.

Then there are his lunches. This was the point on which we found it most difficult to come to terms. Gone are the days when it was my pride and joy to pack dainty, appetising lunches, and his to eat them. Came the day when he suggested that perhaps it would be better if he went out to a café to lunch.

In giving the matter my consideration I bore in mind that once, when making a call at his office, I had seen a very nice little line of an office girl bring him a rather hearty-looking tray for morning tea. I also recalled that during my career as a business girl, I had subsisted on caféteria fare at 1/- daily. But not to be mean, I voted 1/6 for him. However, his secret ambition proved to be 2/6, so we eventually compromised at 10/- weekly.

So there is 35/- straight back to the donor of the intact envelope. This envelope yields weekly six pounds nine shillings and fourpence—no more, no less. And the breadwinner still has to be housed and fed, clothed and laundered, in common with the rest of us.

I must here mention Mike, aged ten, and Bill aged eight, who must now be taken into account in the budgeting.

I put aside the doles for the rent 30/-, insurance 2/6, gas and electricity 7/-, and there we have a total of £3/14/6 tied up hard and fast. I can now prepare to let myself go on the remaining £2/14/10. I cannot really extract much variety from the baker or milkman, as we use just about the same quantity of bread and milk each week. I can just about bank on 3/3 for each of these.

But I get some real satisfaction from the green grocers' shops. I have observed that each one in our shopping centre has his daily special. Today, Mr. Smith's beans may be 2d. lb. cheaper than the others, Mr. Jones's apples will save me 2d. lb. and so on.

BY doing the round of the shops, I can save about 2/- a week in this way, and the extra walking is good for me, anyhow.

The fruit and greens average 7/- a week. I have to be very careful with the butcher on the score of both prices and coupons. Roast lamb (not more than 5 lbs., please) on Sunday, must be atoned for by hash on Monday; sausage meat balls on Tuesday are compensated by rump steak on Wednesday. Tripe, lamb's-fry without bacon, stewed chops finish up the week, and off we start again with roast sirloin. The meat averages 12/- a week.

Shopping at the grocer's is a cut-and-dried affair, the prices the same everywhere, and the same things each week—butter, sugar, flour, tea, eggs, cereal, honey, sauce, soaps. The average here is 11/-.

There is now 18/- left, and how this must be guarded and cherished lest it trickle through the family fingers before it does the thousand-and-one things it must do. This week I must collect his shoes at the bootmakers and pay about 7/- for the repairs. It won't be many weeks before I will be collecting his suit from the dry cleaner's and paying something like 5/- there.

There are fares for shopping, visiting, items from the chemist, new clothes, an occasional gift, replacements in the house. Well, I do it every week and am usually a penny or three-pence on the right side.

But if I were a man, I would hate to hand over my wage envelope intact to a woman to spend as she likes.

**WHO CAN IMAGINE A HUSBAND GIVING UP HIS
PAY ENVELOPE WILLINGLY?**