

# Make Your Complaints Count

A recent survey by a Better Business Bureau council in New York showed that what makes consumers madder than anything else were products that don't perform the way they are represented.

Today more and more persons are registering complaints when products don't live up to their warranties, and their grievances are getting increased attention from consumer units of government.

When a person discovers he has purchased a product that is defective or below the quality that he could reasonably expect—and this happens to even the most open-eyed consumer occasionally—he has an obligation to himself and to other consumers to complain.

By complaining in an effective manner, the consumer makes it more difficult for the unethical or irresponsible manufacturer to operate and more difficult for the disreputable retailer to do business.

At the same time, an effectively registered complaint helps the legitimate manufacturers and businessman better serve the individual consumer and the public at large.

Legitimate operators want to know when and in what way their products have failed to please

When a consumer finds he has a defective product on his hands, he has two courses of action open to him. He can throw the product out, vowing not to "get mixed up with that company again." Or he can turn himself into an "effective complainer," and probably salvage his investment. Hopefully, this latter course of action will also help put a stop to the manufacture and sale of so many inferior products.

The first step in being an "effective complainer" is to complain to the merchant who sold you the product, and tell him you are aware of your warranty rights. In many instances, he might replace the defective product or refund your money.

If he doesn't inform the retailer or manufacturer that you are going to take your complaint to the Better Business Bureau, the county consumer protection agency, or the Pennsylvania Bureau of

Consumer Protection, and repeat your complaint either in person or by the mail to the most available agency handling consumer complaints.

If you still don't receive satisfaction, and you think you have enough written evidence, you can sue the merchant in district magistrate's court, the state Division of Consumer Affairs informs us. There you can plead your case without an attorney, and if you win, the merchant must make up your loss plus pay all expenses you have incurred in suing.

In Pennsylvania, the consumer is assured certain warranty rights under a statute known as the Uniform Commercial Code, which governs the sale of goods.

It lists two kinds of warranties:

1. Those which are expressed verbally (like salesmen's promises) or written (warranty slips), both called "expressed" warranties. These must be distinguished from a mere opinion from a salesperson.

2. Those which, although unexpressed, can be assumed by the consumer to be in force, and are known as "implied" warranties. These come in two varieties—one is a guaranty of "fitness for a particular use," and the other, a guaranty of "merchantability" implies that a product is fit for the ordinary purpose for which such goods are used.

To protect yourself, it is good advice to ask for a written warranty whenever a salesman makes a promise about a product, and to ask questions when you see words or phrases like "merchantability," "as is," or any phrase that seems to be disclaiming warranty rights.

At the same time, the consumer is legally obligated to carry out a reasonable inspection of merchandise if he is to maintain any warranty rights. The law states that implied warranties do not cover defects that should have been discovered in a reasonable examination.

Making the effort to complain about a product that doesn't work, or doesn't do what it's supposed to do, takes extra time and in some cases, spunk. But in the long run, you'll be doing yourself and other consumers a favor.

## Fact and Opinion

"Would you hire yourself?" asks the National Association of Manufacturers. The Association then continues, "This was the provocative headline on an editorial we ran across recently in a company house organ. It's a good question. The editorial seems worthy of a wider audience, and so here are a few quotes from it: 'If you were your boss and needed someone to fill your present position, would you hire yourself? If you had the choice of a dozen people you presently work with, would you be the first choice to fill your position? Or would you have to look around for someone with more initiative, interest in the job, and a better attitude toward the work and fellow employees?' Then the editorial goes on to point out that if we are honest with ourselves, we are each the best judge of our weaknesses and strengths. It's worth thinking about—would you hire yourself?"

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"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing"—Edmund Burke.

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What is the public's biggest gripe against marketers today? According to a Council of Better Business Bureaus poll of 67,700 Americans—billed as "the broadest survey of consumer opinion ever undertaken in this country"—31 percent cite "products that don't perform as represented." Next come misleading advertising (23 percent), poor personal

service in stores (20 percent), misleading labels, directions or packaging (13 percent).

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"Let us not cry wolf until we are reasonably certain we have done enough homework to know what a wolf looks like... We must use our knowledge and not our fears to solve the real problems of our environment."—Dr. A. L. Jones, Standard Oil Company (Ohio).

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Americans spent more than \$20 billion for new cars in 1971—and will spend about \$40 billion more over the next 10 years to operate and maintain them, according to a study made by the Federal Highway Administration. The study further reports that the suburban resident who owns a standard size car will pay \$2,787 for some 7,350 gallons of gasoline over a 10-year period, it is estimated, as well as \$2,147 for maintenance and repairs, \$1,350 for insurance, \$1,800 for parking and tolls, and \$1,319 for state and federal automotive taxes.

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"All experience is an arch, to build upon."—Henry Brooks Adams.

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According to U.S. Representative Philip M. Crane of Illinois, "Problems increase in direct proportion to the degree of attention given them and the amount of money spent on them by the federal government."

### NOW IS THE TIME . . .

Max Smith  
County Agr. Agent  
Telephone 394-6851



#### To Cull Dairy Cows

With high grain and hay prices it might be a good time to take a look at every cow in the milking string to be sure that she is paying her way. This suggestion was made to a group of our good dairymen recently as a way of making more money from the dairy enterprise. Many cows being kept for sentimental purposes, or in hopes of getting another heifer calf, may be wasting feed and not paying for their keep. Beef prices are favorable and efficient production is needed to make any profit.

#### To Do Forage Testing

Again we suggest that more of our local dairy and beef cow producers could benefit from hay and silage testing. Grain prices are high and good forage is scarce and expensive. Forage testing will give the most economical ration to be used based upon the quality of hay and silage. Mineral tests are also available at extra cost. We urge local producers to utilize this scientific test to return more profit from their business.

#### To Keep Hogs Warm

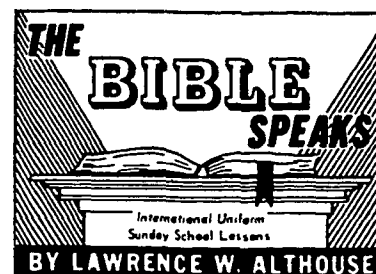
Cold temperatures require hogs to metabolize and utilize more energy to replace heat lost. The important parts of the open building, or pen to be kept warm,

are the bedded and sleeping area. Provide hovers over the areas to help retain the heat produced by gestating sows, small pigs, and finishing hogs. Don't close up an uninsulated building to do the job, because all you will do is create damp, wet buildings and increase production costs.

#### To Control Stray Animals and Birds

Many infectious diseases can be spread by rodents, stray dogs and cats, and wild birds. Producers should make every effort to control these animals and birds as much as possible. In this part of the country the farm buildings are rather close together and one creature may visit several farms and barns in a 24-hour period. This source of infection should be eliminated as much as possible. In confined buildings screens may be put over doors and windows to keep out the birds and keep out animals. Rat and mouse control program should be used. Stray dogs and cats should be eliminated. Every sanitation measure should be taken to prevent animals or human beings from going to several barns which could be the source of another infection. Firm restrictions and careful management are very much in order.

## READ LANCASTER FARMING FOR FULL MARKET REPORTS



### IN THE VALLEY

Lesson for January 21, 1973

Background Scripture: Ezekiel 34  
Devotional Reading: Psalms 23

Consider that . . .

*An enemy of this nation launches an unexpected nuclear missile attack on all the major cities of the United States! Although these metropolitan centers are utterly destroyed and millions are killed, there are several hundred thousand survivors and you and your family are among them.*

*The enemy quickly occupies the country, rounds-up the survivors, and transports them to his homeland for "slave labor." Your country is a night-marish wasteland, you are thousands of miles from home in a strange and alien land, and the future seems utterly without hope.*

*What now is your state of mind? Can you still believe in, worship, and try to serve the God whom your conquerors maintain does not exist?*

#### Under the shadow

This is the question that must have nagged at the Jews during the days of their Babylonian captivity. It is one thing to keep the faith when all is going well, but when disaster strikes, that is the time of testing for our faith. The people of Judah found themselves in what must have seemed to be

the "valley of the shadow of death" of which the psalmist had written.

Several years ago our evening newspaper carried the story of a local boy of seventeen who was robbed of all his money—a total of fifty-three cents!—and then stabbed three times in the lung and heart. Presumed dead by those who found him, he was rushed, nevertheless, to the local hospital. In the Emergency Room, the physician found no breathing or heartbeat and he was presumed dead.

#### Through the valley

Then, however, one of the doctors quickly decided to try emergency surgery and to everyone's astonishment the heartbeat and breathing were restored. Many were still dubious that the youth could survive, but following forty-eight hours of intensive care by a team of physicians, the boy "turned a corner" and began to recover.

The photograph in the evening paper showed the boy and the four doctors who shepherded him through "the valley of the shadow of death." Because of them, the boy had survived.

The experience of "the valley of the shadow of death" is not uncommon to men and nations. Often, what is needed is the leadership of a strong, dedicated man or woman. This was the kind of leadership to which God had called Ezekiel. The dark valley of Babylonian captivity they had brought upon themselves. Yet, even then, God sent them a shepherd to meet them in that valley and guide them through. It is on the other side of that valley that our hope is fulfilled.

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