Smiley



Nope, they don't make them there models no more."

"Musta been a computer error." "Hell, we ain't stocked them things for len years."

"You gotta be kiddin'. Haven't seen that rig since '73."

"That part's obsolete. You'll hafta buy the whole unit." Does this all sound familiar? Are you as

sick of it as I am? If the answers are, "Yes!", what are we going to do about it? We hit the pits, aithough this has been a long-simmering fester, when my wife went to a super-market the other day-not a little corner grocery, mark you-and the only potatoes they had were new ones from California or somewhere at a hell of a

price. We love new potatoes. But we like them

"They don't stock them things no more" in August, fresh out of the patch, boiled or fried, slathered in butter, along with some new corn and green onions and real

lamp. I wonder how the farmers of P.E.I. and New Brunswick, as well as the local chans, feel when they bear there are no good, old potatoes, even though they had to plow half their crop into the pigtrough because they couldn't get a decent price.

tomatos that get red from the sun, not a

But potatoes are only one little symptom of a disease that affects this country.

It seems to me that with our economy in such a deplorable state, merchants and contractors and skilled workmen would get off their butts and get back to the business of keeping their customers happy.

One way they could help is by refusing to accept the airy waves of manufacturers that there's a "shortage" of this, and a "new model" of that and "We don't make parts for these any more," of the other.

During a war, people grumble, but put up with, more or less cheerfully, shortages, making do, using what's available rather than what they want.

Last I heard, Canada was not at war, and I'm fed up to the teeth with lame excuses about this being out of stock and that being out of tashion.

Buy something new. Two years later it breaks down. Take it in for repairs and they look at you as if you were crazy. What? Mac, you gotta be kiddin'. Repair that toaster (iron, TV set)? Cost you too much. Have to send it back to the factory. Dunno if they still have the parts. Better off with a new one.

What we should say is, "Well listen, Mac, I happen to like my old one. It was a wedding present, and it cost plenty. Fix it or I find someone who can!"

instead, we mumble angrily, frustratedly, and wind up buying the new one, which looks cheaper, costs more, and will break down in ten months. By which time it will be obsolete and impossible to repair.

There's something else that bothers me about this whole syndrome—the utter waste.

Recently, we bought a new TV set and a new fridge. No, we weren't trying to get

the economy rolling, though every little bit belps. The old ones were-well, old. But both were still working.

Know where the old ones went? To the dump. Something in my Presbyterian soul rebelled when I learned this. The TV set had a fine wooden cabinet. It would have made a great liquor or record container, or hope chest, or something. Into the dump.

And the fridge, in any other country, (except possibly The States) would have had a new motor and insulation installed and gone on happily keeping the beer cold for another five years. Not to mention the several hundred pounds of metal in it. Into the dump.

I seethed inwardly. But I am not a cabinet maker. Nor can I install motors and insulation. All I can do with a fridge is take out the beer and put in the butter. But, into the dump?

I felt rotten. Somebody could have used that old TV set, somebody who didn't have one. It still produced a picture and sound. Somebody could have used that old fridge, even though the ice-cream melted and the butter froze.

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And I'm just skirting the fringe. Our entire society is built on waste, forced consumption, and passing the buck. The latest recipient of the passed buck is the computer.

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If you take it to the Supreme Court, you might, just might, get a real letter admitting there was an error, but it was the

in sight. Erect structures that will be slums in two decades. That's Canada

And when somebody comes into your store, waving something he wants to replace, be sure to say, with ill-concealed, malicious triumph, "Oh, they don't stock them there things no more."

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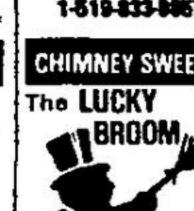
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