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FOUR OUNCES LESS FOR EACH PERSON THAN LAST SUNDAY

Few Joints Larger Than 1 lb. Smithfield Invaded Before Daylight—Fish Prices Fixed Higher Than Market Rates—Crowd Seize Grocery Van.

(From the London Sunday Despatch, Jan. 20)

London butchers barricaded their meatless shops against their customers yesterday. In nearly every case where business was transacted the traders kept their shutters up and admitted their clientele singly through closely held doors.

Some of the retail butchers in Smithfield even went the length of erecting barricades of blocks outside their stalls.

Yesterday was London's worst experience so far as the meat shortage is concerned, and in few cases were joints of more than 1 lb. obtainable.

Unprecedented scenes took place at Smithfield market, which was invaded as early as four in the morning by people from the suburbs.

A source of general indignation was the disappearance from the market of rabbits and mutton since the fixing of the official prices.

The controlled prices for fish were issued yesterday afternoon. In many cases the rates allowed under this official scale are higher than the prices which ruled in the market yesterday.

Mr. H. W. G. Milman, superintendent of the Central Markets, in his review of yesterday's supply, states that the total amount of meat available for London was four ounces less per head than last week.

"People were here before four o'clock this morning—and they've been coming in thousands ever since," said a policeman on duty in Smithfield Market yesterday. The great crowds there were a striking indication of how London is feeling the acute meat shortage.

Week-end supplies were scantier than ever, 3,973 tons as against 4,686 tons.

People from the suburbs who had been waiting in queues on Friday came to the Central Markets in the belief that they had a better chance of getting meat for today. At the shops outside and at the stalls inside the markets enormous queues were assembling all the morning.

People brought their own paper to wrap the meat in, but judging from the small portions served they did not require much paper. Very few got more than a lump of meat weighing about a pound, which scarcely corresponded to the description of a "joint." A big proportion of the crowds were made up of well-dressed women, who were rather disconcerted by the badinage in which the salesman are wont to indulge.

"Here you are, old dear," and "Hurry up, mother," were genialities which astonished suburban wives who never had been to Smithfield before.

After their experience last Saturday, when the crowds threatened to carry the stalls by storm, some of the salesmen had erected barricades of chopping blocks, but the formation of queues made this protection unnecessary.

The sales actually began at 6 a. m. and some of the butchers were working continuously until noon, although by that time most of the stocks were gone.

QUEUE OF 1,000 PEOPLE

Some people left the queues and bought without difficulty quantities of what looked like excellent liver, kidneys, and sheep's hearts. But very few of the poorly dressed women would attempt to buy anything but beef, pork or mutton.

A very few rabbits were on sale, and two soldiers on leave who said they had been waiting for three hours since five o'clock were served with two rabbits each, the crowd agreeing to make way for the Tommies. The salesman of this firm stated that during the past ten weeks they had received 80,000 rabbits, but this week, since the maximum price was fixed, they had not received 500.

A queue of 1,000 people was outside the Central Annex in Farrington street at 8 a. m.

In all the London districts the majority of the butchers' shops were closed. Outside those that opened for a few hours there were larger queues than ever, and in many instances there were margarine queues in the same street.

Meat queues were seen for the first time in Richmond, and at Kingston, where very small supplies were received, the shutters were kept up and the customers admitted in twos and threes. This is now the usual practice at most butchers' shops.

In Balham High-road there were three long queues before 7.30. One shop in Catford had up a notice, "No grousing."

INDIGNANT WOMEN

A well-known wealthy woman went to her butcher's in the West End and

found a long queue mostly composed of poor women waiting outside. She was foolish enough to push her way through into the shop. There were at once indignant exclamations from the crowd. The woman, who was an old customer, gave her order for some liver and sweet breads and wanted to take some away with her.

"I dare not let you do it, madam. I have no supplies for the women outside, I will send yours along."

The woman went outside to face an angry crowd that was waiting to see if she had any meat. The policeman in charge of the queue said to her, "Have you any meat in your bag, madam? I cannot let you take away any with all these people waiting."

"I have not got any—look in my bag and see," said the now very seared customer, opening her bag. After that she was allowed to go in peace.

The incident is very insignificant of the temper of the people in the queues today and of the trouble that may be expected if any preference is shown anywhere for the well-to-do.

In a queue in the Walworth road the women said they had no idea when the shop would open, but they were going to stay until it did. Many women say that the queues are "killing them." A night worker on the railway said that she spent the best part of her days looking for food instead of sleeping.

One big store in the West End has adopted an excellent method of dealing with the margarine queues in their establishment. Each customer, who is allowed half a pound, is told to have a sixpenny piece or six coppers ready. Thus no time is lost in giving change.

Yesterday a queue of about a hundred people were served in less than ten minutes.

"The shops could easily make this arrangement," said the manager, "and people would only need wait a few minutes instead of a few hours, but, of course, the shop would not get the good advertisement it gets."

At Peckham only two butchers' shops were found open. Another had a notice, "Open tonight. Please don't knock. It delays work." A butcher said he had only been able to get six fowls at the market.

One woman was allowed by the policeman to go home and see if her six little children were alright and to take her place again in the queue. Among those who waited 3½ hours was a child of about seven years old who wanted sausages.

OXTAILS AT 4s. 6d. EACH

In this district oxtails were fetching the extraordinary price of 4s. 6d. each. There were sausage queues in Camberwell, queues for most necessary foods in Brixton. At the Maypole shop at Southall there was a queue of 5,000 near the firm's margarine factory, a rumor having been circulated that the fat was being sold in 1 lb. lots. Customers came as far away as Swindon, but there were only supplies for local residents, who had to show their sugar cards. Mr. Platt, the executive officer of the Edmonston Food Committee, complains that he was mobbed in the street by women who used "intolerable" language to him and the clerks in his office.

An amazing story of a meat hoard was told at a meeting of Edmonston Food Committee by Mr. J. Oliver, a member of the local council.

He had learned, he said, that 14 sides of beef had been sent to a certain private house in another part of London.

He went to the office of the local food committee and was referred to the Ministry of Food. At the latter place he was told to go to the Meat Commissioner's, whence he was again directed to the local food committee.

Eventually he learned that the person who had received the beef was an East End Jew, who was not a registered butcher.

The meat was commandeered. There were queues in the old Kent road before the shops were open. The Maypole displayed a large "Sold Out" notice, but people stood outside in expectation of receiving some supplies, while at a butcher's a queue waited although a "No Meat" notice was on the door. Long lines of people were at provision shops where queues have not been previously seen.

FOUR OUNCES LESS PER HEAD

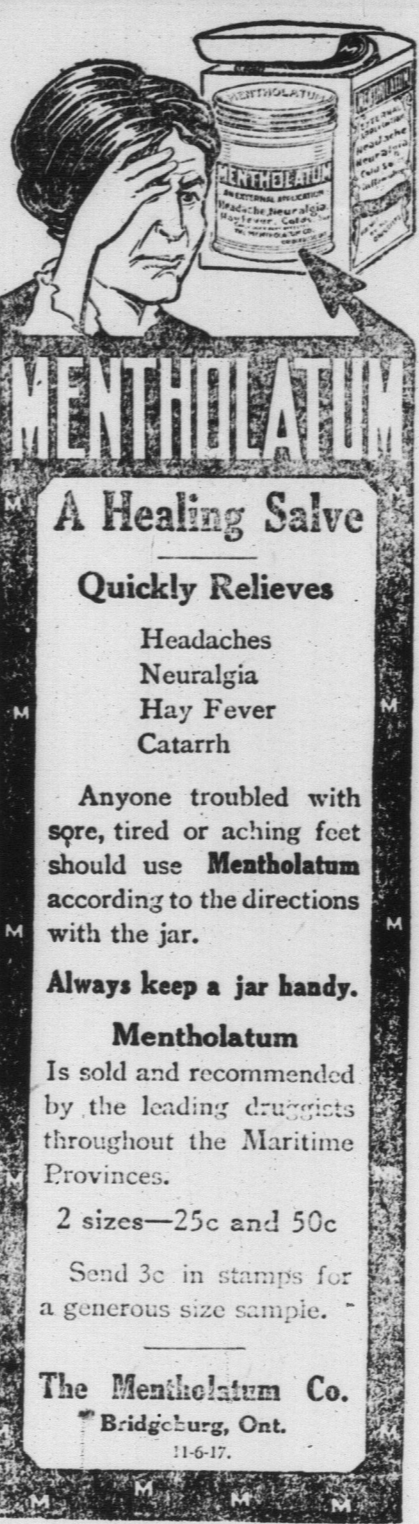
In Woolwich the Food Control Committee distributed 5 tons of margarine, so that most people got supplies; but there was very little meat.

At Smithfield yesterday a Deptford butcher said: "I have been lucky in getting two flanks after waiting in the queue for two hours. I have also secured two rabbits. That is the extent of my week-end stock for 800 customers."

There was plenty of tinned meat and eggs on sale in the market, but again there was not much "offal."

The official report of Mr. H. W. J. Milman, superintendent of the London Central market, states:

"Today's supplies were 408 tons. Supplies for the week aggregated 3,793 tons, as against 4,686 tons last week—a decrease of 893 tons, and



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