

Baldies Hit Price Boost, Barbers Plead Dignity

By W. W. EDGAR
Observer Roving Editor

The latest twist in the spiraling economy—the rise in the price of haircuts to \$3—has caused considerable consternation among the male of the species and not all of the blame is being placed on the long-haired hippies.

The new price scale is to go into effect, officially, on Dec. 1, but many of the barber shops throughout Observerland already have been charging the new rate.

The 25-cent increase is the third in as many years and is the final boost of a three-year contract.

ANNOUNCEMENT of the new scale brought immediate howls of protest from those whose hair is thinning to the point where they now are cursed or blessed with bald spots of all sizes.

According to the barbers on the line, few protests have been heard in the shops, other than to a kidding manner—such as the customer, with a smile, asking how the clipper manipulator likes his new Cadillac. But on the outside, there have been signs of revolt to the point that many of the bald-headed clan have purchased clippers and now are boasting that "my wife does my hair."

THE PIONEER among the protesters is Tom Notebaert,



HARD HIT by the haircut price hike, which no longer provides for trims, are Dr. John Salan (left) and Frank Henderson, Plymouth eye specialist and businessman, respectively.

the Plymouth realtor, who claims his wife has been cutting his hair for several years. And, he points out, with a bit of pride, he is in select company, now that one of the national magazines featured a picture story of Mrs. Leonard Bernstein cutting the bushy locks of the New York Philharmonic leader at home, prior to a major concert.

One of the pet peeves of the protesters is the fact that the

term "trim" no longer has a place on the price list. They claim that this is a double wrong and that the man with the bald spot should be entitled to some sort of a "break." "All we get is a trim," Jim Taylor, another of the bald-headed group, pointed out. "Yet we are charged full price. It just isn't right...and I'll be getting a pair of clippers too."

"There is nothing new in the plain," the barbers over at

Jerry's Shop in Plymouth, chorused. "We always hear things like this when the price goes up. But the raise is justified."

"The cost-of-living index is rising, and other people raise their prices, so why can't we without being criticized?"

They argued that the wage scale is low enough now. Without such things as fringe benefits, there is a shortage of barbers, they say.

At the Korner Shop in Farmington, where the increase has not yet been put into effect, the barbers are preparing for a raft of complaints, but they don't expect anything serious. "We expect to hear some complaints," they said.

"At best, some of our customers may decide to take a longer period between visits, but the idea will wear off and we don't expect any serious reaction."

BIG BILL, boss man at one

of the most popular shops in Livonia, was more concerned than some of his associates over the wallings of the customers.

"Sure, this long-haired craze of the hippies has cost us some customers," he said, "but that is not the main thought behind the increase."

"The real issue is the fact that the barber—whether the owner of the shop or the one on the line—wants to retain his dignity. He wants the dignity of being a skilled tradesman. "To retain this dignity he must have a living wage to match the skilled trades in other lines—and he's not getting it."

"There's one thing to remember," he went on. "The barber gets only what the public wants to give him. He isn't given a guaranteed hourly wage and must just sit in his shop and wait for customers."

HE LOOKED AT A few empty chairs and then continued. "Some of our lower-class tradesmen today are getting about \$3 an hour or \$120 a week along with fringe benefits such as insurance and hospitalization. But the barber is far from that."

"Today's barber puts in a 10-hour day, five days a week, or 50 hours. At the wage scale of the lower skills, he should be getting \$150 a week. Yet, even under the new scale, he

won't be getting that much." Fine, but what about the trim—why should a bald-headed man be asked to pay the same price as the man with the bushy head of hair?

"All trims are hair cuts," Bill answered. "If they weren't we'd always be in an argument over what constituted a trim. How much should come off and should there be any hair taken off the top?"

IT WAS POINTED out that the time consumed was much different and that it required approximately 15 minutes to cut a regular head of hair and only half that for the bald-headed man.

"Tell you what would help," one of the protesters chimed in. "Why don't you charge so much an hour? Let's take the present working time. At the rate I've checked here, you can handle four bushy hair cut jobs an hour. At \$3 a job, that would be \$12 per hour."

"Now, in my case, I've been in the chair only seven minutes, or about an eighth of an hour. I should only be paying \$1.50."

Big Bill's eyes sort of glared. "What about the waiting time?" he asked. "What about the morning hours when no one comes in or only a few before noon? Who would pay the barber for those?"

Big Bill stopped for breath, then concluded, "When the Tiggers raise their prices or any-

one else, you don't hear of a boycott or a great howl over the new price. Everything is going up, and the fans know it. So, why not give the barber the same break?"

But, make no mistake about it, the sale of clippers for "home jobs" is on the increase among the bald-headed frater-

nity. "As my wife put it," Plymouth Township Supervisor John D. McEwen, one of the bald-headed group, explained: "Don't tell me they charge you \$3 for cutting your hair?" So, it wouldn't surprise him to learn that she had purchased a pair of clippers.

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The Westland Observer	10,100	9,980	
The Garden City Observer	11,400	11,243	
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STILL GETTING a good deal of service for their money at the barber shop are Robert Beyer (left) and Joseph L. Hudson, Plymouth druggist and realtor, respectively. (Observer photos)

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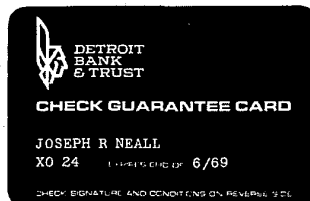


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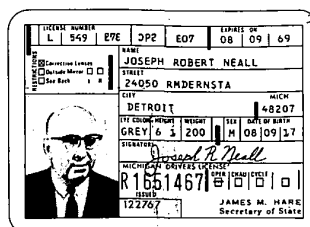
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