

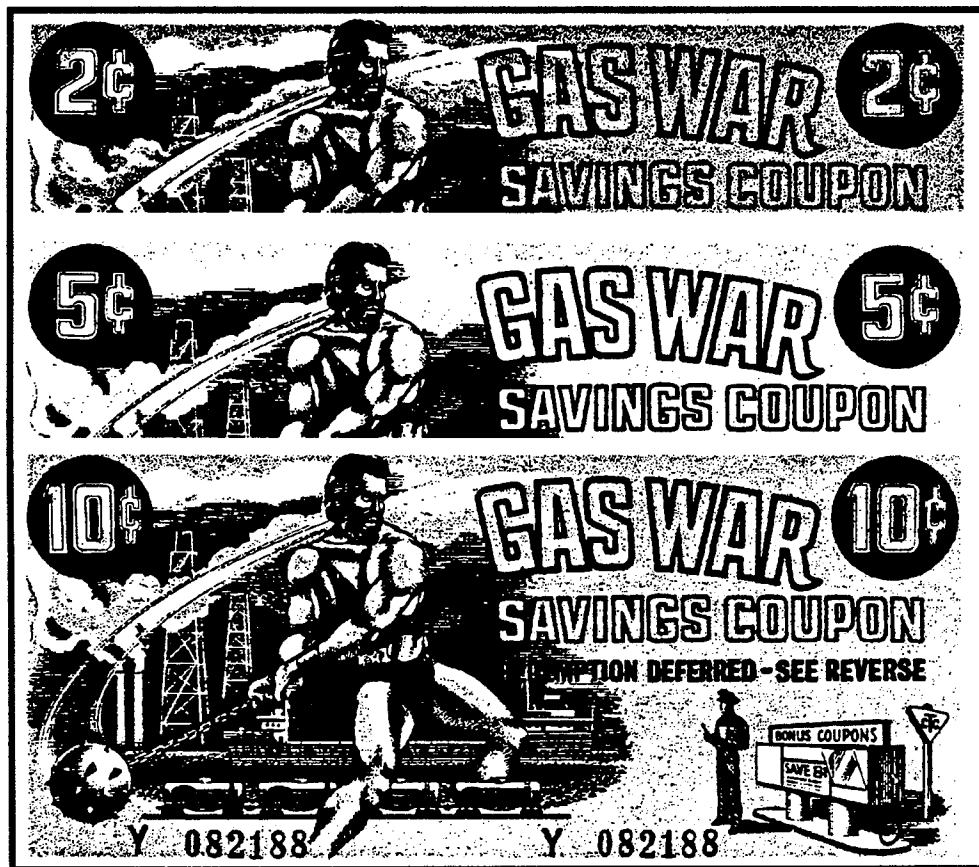
CTC's MIGHTY HERCULES GAS WAR SAVINGS COUPONS

by Roger Fox
CM 0000009

If there ever was a contest for great marketing sensationalism in the 1960's, Canadian Tire would have been in contention for top honors with this series of coupons!

Everything about this series was geared to counteracting the Major Oil "Giant's" purported threat and command to *"stop dividing the profits and conform to THEIR way — OR ELSE!"*

A brilliant piece of marketing well executed in both graphics on the obverse and text on the reverse, was issued in 1963 to C.T.C. gasbar customers in the midst of a lengthy gas war which saw regular gas prices dip to as low as 35.9 cents per gallon, or at today's prices, 7.89 cents per litre !



Canadian Tire's policy of 'dividing the profits' everytime a customer paid by cash by the issuing of cash bonus coupons was being viewed as a possible threat of lost customers by the major oil companies and as a result, according to C.T.C., was trying to 'smash' them 'by pricing gasoline below cost !

Text wording on the reverse makes C.T.C. look like 'David' taking on MANY 'Goliaths' but without a hope of a chance by themselves. The appeal to the customer: "shoulder to shoulder with you, the customer — we will win this war, is laced with underdog patriotism. The coupon goes on to say: "accumulating these War Savings Coupons, and encouraging your friends to join you, will provide more than financial aid — it is tangible evidence of support ..it is your order to Canadian Tire to hold the line against those few "BIGS" who, by hit-and-run pricing, are commanding Canadian Tire to stop dividing profits with customers". WOW! ! !

It is a good thing that these coupons were not available in Iraq two years ago, or Saddam Hussein might have won 'Desert Storm'! This message is very powerful!

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And now, at the bottom in the fine print on the reverse of the coupon, C.T.C. explains their purpose. Issued in 2, 5, 10, and 25 cent denominations: *"this coupon will become negotiable when the gas war is over and gas prices return to 'pre-war' normal of 41.9 cents per gallon, (or 9.2 cents per litre), the value of the coupon plus equal value in gasbar coupons will combine to have a total purchasing power"* In other words, these Hercules coupons were issued with a value, but their redemption was deferred until the above conditions were met.

It wasn't until 1964 that C.T.C. "called in" these notes and by then many people had pitched them out. They did not really circulate, so most that did survive are in reasonable condition.

They were issued in four denominations, and in four pastel colors, on bond paper, and printed locally. (not by the bank note companies) All denominations have double red serial numbers on the obverse at the bottom as follows

2 cent	gray	red prefix	letter "W"
5 cent	green	red prefix	letter "X"
10 cent	red	red prefix	letter "Y"
25 cent	mauve	red prefix	letter "Z"

The reverse text was also printed in the denomination colors.

The obverse, being the most striking, shows a Hercules style 'Giant' in a chain-mail like loin-cloth swinging a huge spiked ball and chain through a petroleum theme background of oil derricks, a large oil tankership, and four rail tank cars towards a small C.T.C gas bar — which looks like it doesn't stand a chance in hell of surviving!

To rub it in even more, there is a uniformed gas attendant standing guard in front of the pumps which have a pump topper sign advertising "Bonus Coupons" and to "save 8%!"

The denomination amounts are in two black circles at the upper left and right corners with the bold striking words "GAS WAR SAVINGS COUPON" printed center-right. The additional words in black "REDEMPTION DEFERRED - SEE REVERSE" instructs the reader to turn over the coupon to view the conditions.

The lower denominations of 2, 5, and 10 cent are the most common with the 25 cent note the scarcest. Serial numbers reach into the low 6 digits for the lower denominations, although I do not have any minting quantities.

This is C.T.C.'s most striking set, and the wording and intent, although serious at the time, now seems almost ridiculous as profound 'over-kill', and somewhat humorous, making it a FUN set to collect.

If any of you fellow collectors have any other information on this set, I would like to hear from you. Please write me:

Roger A. Fox,
382 Selby Crescent,
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 6E1

CANADIAN TIRE CHOOSES TO SHARE PROFITS WITH CUSTOMERS

Within the framework of our free-enterprise system and the freedom of the democratic process, Canadian Tire chooses to share its profits with you — the customer. When, rather than "charging it", you pay cash for gasoline, a considerable saving results. Cash Bonus Coupons are Canadian Tire's way of sharing this and other savings.

THE PETROLEUM GIANTS SAY: "STOP DIVIDING THE PROFITS OR ELSE"

The price war presently being waged against Canadian Tire, by the "Biggs of the Biggest" in the petroleum industry, is as we see it, the Giants' thunderous command: "Stop dividing the profits — conform to our way or we will smash you by pricing gasoline below cost."

WITH YOUR HELP, TOGETHER WE WILL DEFY THE GIANTS AND WIN THE GAS WAR

Standing alone, pitted against Giants, C.T.C. hasn't a chance, but — shoulder to shoulder with you, the customer — we will win this war. Our mutual cause is morally and economically right.

ACCUMULATING COUPONS GIVES US MORAL SUPPORT

Accumulating these War Savings Coupons, and encouraging your friends to join you, will provide more than financial aid — it is tangible evidence of support . . . It is your order to Canadian Tire to hold the line against those few "Biggs" who, by hit-and-run pricing, are commanding Canadian Tire to stop dividing profits with customers.

WHEN THE GAS WAR IS OVER, THIS COUPON WILL BE WORTH 2¢

When the gas war is over, and prices return to "pre-war" normal (41.9¢ per gallon) and there is profit to divide, this coupon will become negotiable — this 2¢ War Savings Coupon and one 2¢ Gas Coupon combined will have a 4¢ purchasing value.

MOR-POWER GASOLINE ASSOCIATES

Reverse of coupon
showing conditions