

IT'S ARMORED CARS AND GUNS FOR CANADIAN TIRE COUPONS

by George Gamester probably from Toronto Sun, circa 1992 or 1993, sent in by Ross Irwin

When, the guards carry fresh shipments from the armored cars into the vaults at the top-security location in mid-town Toronto, they take no chances. Eyes alert... Hands on guns.

What is this precious cargo? Diamonds? Gold? Bill Caudill's paycheck?

Nope. A distinctive Canadian treasure hoarded jealously over the years - in glove compartments, dresser drawers and purses.

Canadian Tire coupons.

Quite a demand for that "funny money" these days, as you'll learn from our mini-report:

We're not kidding about the security. They really do cart those coupons around in armored trucks. And at Canadian Tire's central coupon office, they've got enough alarms, cameras and anti-theft devices to equip a bank.

20 MILLION A YEAR

No wonder. Know how many new coupons Canadian Tire is putting into circulation every year? Twenty million. Next to banknotes and maybe travellers' cheques, it could be the most popular currency around.

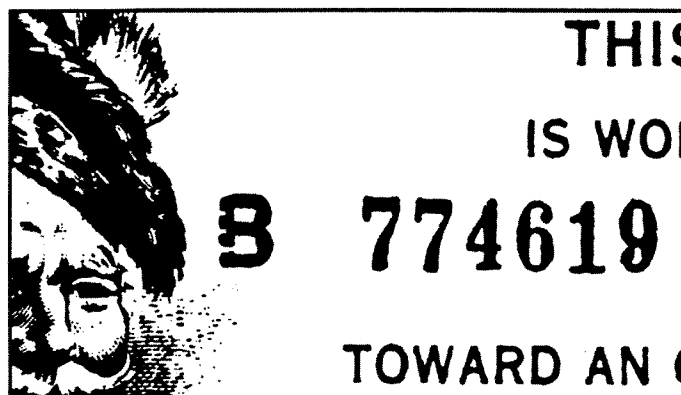
And, in these inflationary times when bankers say the \$20 bill is about to replace the \$1 bill as our most popular banknote, Canadian Tire coupons may also be due for a change. Seems they've considered upgrading the top-denomination coupon - to \$2 from \$1.

Sure get around, those coupons. A member of the Billes family (which founded Canadian Tire back in 1922) tells us a wad of coupons was once used to purchase a "yak-skin" coat in Afghanistan.

A minor variety in the Sandy McTires

Notice the broken "B" on this MPIB 10B3.

I do not remember who sent this to me, If you could let me know so I could acknowledge the right person.



"They say the guy who was selling the coat wrinkled the coupons between his fingers and bit them to make sure it was banknote paper. Then he said, "Okay". Maybe he thought it was Canadian currency."

No problem. Next time that yak dealer is in Toronto, he can still redeem those coupons for merchandise, just as customers have been doing since 1958 when A.J. Billes introduced them to encourage cash sales and give customers another incentive to keep coming back.

SOLD IN BELGIUM

The yak dealer wasn't the only one fooled. Seems one enterprising con man from Brussels would acquire coupons here, then head over to Belgium and sell them to gullible Europeans at "bargain" prices.

He apparently convinced his victims the coupons (printed in Ottawa by the Canadian Bank Note Co. and bearing a portrait of a jolly Scotsman) were Canadian currency.

With such scoundrels around, you can understand why one Toronto store manager was suspicious when a woman showed up with several plastic shopping bags jammed with coupons.

Stollen, forged?

Nope. Turned out the woman's husband, uncle and brother-in-law were all cab drivers who'd been buying their gas at Canadian Tire for years and turning the coupons over to her.

"Came to about \$900.00", recalls a Canadian Tire spokesman. "I believe she bought a snow blower - and got more coupons for the purchase".

