

The Rising Protest Against Profiteering Evil

PROTESTS OF HIGH COST OF LIVING REACH CAPITAL

A Washington dispatch, dated July 12, says: Growing indignation at steady rises in prices and warnings of greater increases to come are reaching official ears in Washington.

Concern over the situation was shown here today in the following developments:

Mail reaching senators and representatives is liberally sprinkled with complaints from "back home".

Investigation of alleged profiteering by retailers in Washington and possibly other cities, will begin Monday, Senator Sherman, Illinois, chairman of the District of Columbia committee, announced.

Chairman Colver of the federal trade commission urged passage of legislation restricting the packers.

Representative Osborne, California, in the house today, declared wages must remain high to meet relatively low purchasing power of money. The first sign that officials here are beginning to act in the situation came in announcement from the war department in the announcement that stores of bacon, canned beef and canned vegetables would be sold through city governments at prices 25 to 50 per cent under the market prices.

To facilitate wide distribution of these stores, cities will be allowed 10 days credit on purchases. They must promise to re-sell at cost, adding only transportation expenses.

This action resulted from general criticism of the department's previously announced plan to sell these surplus stores, valued at \$121,000,000 abroad.

Congressional criticism has been strong against the war department this week for failure to place these foodstuffs on the market last February.

The senate district committee are planning to quiz dealers on prices, as a result of figures compiled by the agriculture department that although wholesale prices dropped 25 per cent last week the housewife still pays the old price.

PRESENT RETAIL PRICES DECLARED EXCESSIVE

A Washington dispatch, dated July 5, says: Federal supervision of the packing, sale and distribution of meat products was declared by the department of agriculture to be the only solution for the present situation, in which meat prices to the consumer are so high that he is denying himself, and in which prices for livestock, especially beef and lambs, are so low that the producer is losing money.

The department emphasized that "save food" signs should now be disregarded as to meat, especially beef, and wheat products. Faced by the largest wheat crop on record, and with many cattle raised in response to the demand for meat production for the army now maturing, the American people, the department asserted, must realize that no necessity for conservation of such foods any longer exists.

PRICES NOT JUSTIFIED

A survey of the meat price situation, the department said, reveals that the excessive retail prices now existing are not justified by wholesale quotations. Prices to the producers have declined since the war, it was said, but prices paid by the consumer have not materially lessened. The only solution, the department believes, is more strict federal supervision.

The entire meat situation, based on conferences with senators and representatives from livestock producing regions, was summarized by the department as follows:

"There is no longer need for meat conservation. The supply is plentiful and patriotic citizens may freely disregard the meat saving placards which are still displayed at many eating places.

"Europe needs our surplus pork, but is filling its beef requirements by importations from South America and Australia. Prices of beef cattle have fallen sharply since March 1, on account of the stoppage of exports for army use and a slack demand for beef at home. Beef producers and lamb producers who sell their products at this time are confronted with the

HIGH COST OF LIVING INQUIRY

A Washington dispatch, dated July 14, says: Investigation of the cost of living by a special committee of six representatives appointed by Speaker Gillett was proposed in a resolution introduced by Representative Johnson, democrat, Mississippi. The committee would be required to recommend to congress "the proper course to pursue in order that the high cost of food may be reduced and those who are guilty of profiteering may be punished."

danger of heavy financial losses which would tend to restrict production and cause a serious shortage in future.

URGES U. S. SUPERVISION

"The United States will never have a satisfactory and permanent solution of the problem until the manufacture, sale and distribution of meat products are officially supervised by authorized agents of the government, working in co-operation with state and municipal authorities, whose only aim is to serve the public at large and not any particular class. When the federal government is enabled by law to maintain a just supervision over the meat producing industry that will prevent unfair dealings, speculations and profiteering, and when the states and municipalities are enabled by law to exercise similar supervision over intrastate and local business, then only can we expect to have fair and stable markets in which producer and consumer alike will have a square deal."

NO LIMIT TO PACKER POWER

A Washington dispatch, dated July 11, says: An approaching packer dominion of all important foods in the United States and an international control of meat products with foreign countries seems a certainty unless fundamental action is taken to prevent it, the federal trade commission declared today in part one of its report to President Wilson on the "extent and growth of power of the five packers in meat and other industries".

"A fair consideration of the course the

PROFITEERING MUST BE STAMPED OUT

Major Thomas J. Dickson of Kansas, chaplain of the Sixth Field Artillery, United States Regular Army and senior chaplain of the United States Combat troops, has just returned to the United States after a period of active service in France.

The major returns to America with a message of simon-pure American patriotism, appreciative of what America's men did to help win the war, from ammunition driver to first line fighter. Speaking of the sacrifices made by the American soldiers who gave up their lives in battle and its meaning to us, the major said:

"Those boys gave all they had—their life's blood. And we as Americans must never forget them nor what they sacrificed. And we must realize that a new era has come to the world. And we must fight for a higher idealism of Americanism and WE MUST STAMP OUT THE FIGHT FOR THE SORDID DOLLAR."

"PROFITEERING MUST AND WILL BE STAMPED OUT, but through genuine Americanism and not through anarchistic uprising or socialistic warfare. America is big enough for us all and good enough for any man who can appreciate it."

packers have followed and the position they have already reached," said the report, "must lead to the conclusion that they threaten the freedom of the market of the country's food industries and of the by-product of the industries linked therewith. The packer control of other foods will not require long in developing."

"Declaring 'the history of the packers' growth is interwoven with illegal commissions, rebates and with undisclosed control of corporations', the report urged the importance of full publicity of corporate ownership for all industries.

"As to devices for securing control, there does not exist adequate law," the report said. "In its absence unfair competition may run its course to the goal of monopoly and accomplish the ruin of competitors without the secret ownership being suspected and consequently without complaint to the commission or investigation of facts. The competitor is in jeopardy so long as he has not the knowledge of true ownership and the public is entitled to such knowledge."

Alleging that the "big-five" packers—Swift & Co., Armour & Company, Wilson & Company, Morris & Company and the Cudahy Company jointly or separately wield controlling interest in 574 companies, minority interest in ninety-five others and undetermined interest in ninety-three—a total of 762 companies—and that they produce or deal in some 775 commodities, largely food products, the report gives this picture of growing packer invasion into related and unrelated industries:

"In addition to meat foods, they produce or deal in such divers commodities as fresh tomatoes and banjo strings, leather and cottonseed oil, breakfast foods, gin fix, curled hair, pepsin, and washing powders. Their branch houses are not only stations for the distribution of meat and poultry, but take on the wholesale grocery stores, dealers in various kinds of produce and jobbers to special lines of trade.

They have interests large enough to be dominating influence in most of the services connected with the production and distribution of animal foods and their by-products are reaching out for control, not only of substitutes for other lines into which the integration of their business has led them. They are factors in cattle-loan companies.

Chicago, July 11.—Charges against the big meat packers contained in the report issued by the federal trade commission today were denied by Louis F. Swift, president of the Swift & Co., speaking for his own company and for the other big Chicago packers, Armour & Co., Morris & Co., Wilson & Co. and Cudahy Co. Mr. Swift said the report was "merely an attack upon large and successful business organizations and should be resented by all Americans who are proud of the industrial progress of the nation."

"It is to be regretted that in these days," said Mr. Swift, "when the public feels keenly the pressure of high prices, a government body does not give out facts respecting prices and profits. This has never been done fairly by the federal trade commission as regards the packing industry, although the commission has constantly had the most complete information in its possession.

"The report just issued by the trade commission and its discussion of the number of subsidiary companies and its calculation of percentages of the classes of business handled by the packers, are not only erroneous, but are entirely immaterial to the real question in which the public is interested, namely, why are prices high.

"I do not believe that the finding of such a prejudiced and unfair report should be used to influence public opinion or as a basis for the radical legislation that has been introduced at Washington."

DRIVE OUT THE MIDDLEMAN

A Denver, Col., dispatch, dated July 11, says: With a declaration that "the high cost of living, the high cost of dying, the high cost of justice and the outrageously high cost of everything is the paramount issue in the world today", the convention of the brotherhood of locomotive firemen and engineers today adopted a resolution urging immediate establishment of municipal markets and cold storage houses to deal