

## The National Outlook Consumer Prices Spurt Upward

By RALPH ROBEY

During October consumer prices spurted upward. That is strong language, especially since the increase was only 4 tenths of one per cent. But the term "spurted" is justified because there was not supposed to be any over-all rise from September. Even the experts in the Bureau of Labor Statistics who compile the Consumer Price Index, thought that the September figure would be the high for the year.

In general three things can create higher prices. These are inadequate volume of goods for the current demand, higher cost of production, and excessive increase in the volume of money.

Recently there has been an increase in the volume of money. But the increase has been modest—so modest, in fact, that many persons are critical of the banking system for holding down the growth. This criticism is not justified because it has been technical factors, rather than deliberate policy, which is largely responsible for the slow growth in the money supply. In any case one can not account for the increase in consumer prices by the change in the money supply, because the total is still below a year earlier.

Cost of production involves capital, raw materials, and labor. The last two are by far the most important.

Raw materials, of course, are of all kinds. The best measure we have of them is the wholesale price index. This index has been stable for two years. Individual items have gone up and down, but the changes have not been such as to put general pressure upon consumer prices.

Labor costs, as measured by wages and fees for services, have been upon an upward trend for years. This had had an effect upon consumer prices, and it accounts for a considerable portion of the recent rise.

Inadequate volume means that the offering of goods is less than the demand at the current price. This was true in many instances in October.

For example, food which is the largest single element in a family budget, and hence carries the greatest weight in the Consumer Price Index, advanced 6 tenths of one per cent. Some meats and some fresh vegetables declined slightly in price but this was more than offset by higher prices for eggs, tomatoes, pork, milk, bread, butter, cereals, ice cream, baby food, most fresh fruits, and so forth. Many factors contributed to the relative shortages in these items, including the September hurricane in the Southeast, low hog prices last spring which curtailed the pig crop, and so forth.

Housing prices rose in October as a result of higher rents and higher fuel costs.

Transportation increased in price, by 1.4 percent—the most of any of the main categories on

the index. This was caused by introduction of 1961 automobiles, a rise in the local transit fare in one city and some scattered increases in railroad coach fares.

And so it went across the board. There was an increase in every major category of the Consumer Price Index. None of the changes was large, but the fact that they were so widespread and unexpected, makes the rise most disturbing. They were characteristic of creeping inflation, and the only thing worse than that is galloping inflation.

The crucial question is whether this upward trend is going to continue. Unfortunately there is no legitimate basis for saying that it will not continue. There is nothing in the present situation to cause a sharp run-up of prices, but neither is there anything to prevent a further slow upward crawl.

### For The People

By BEDNADETTE W. HOYLE  
Public Information Officer  
North Carolina State Board of  
Public Welfare

(Editor's Note: This is one of a series of articles explaining public welfare in North Carolina.)

**Can disabled persons get financial help from public welfare?**

Yes, if they meet the eligibility requirements of the program of aid to the permanently and totally disabled.

**What are the requirements?**

The person must be between the ages of 18 and 65 years. He must be making his home in this state. He must not be an inmate of a public institution. He must be permanently and totally disabled. He must be in need because he does not have the essential requirements of daily living, such as food, shelter, clothing and other necessary items.

**Where should application be made?**

At the county department of public welfare.

**What information must the applicant furnish?**

Proof of his age, information concerning his financial situation and his living arrangements, and a required medical report. A caseworker in the county department of public welfare will help when the individual has trouble in getting the necessary information or in making an appointment for the medical examination.

**What factors are considered when application is reviewed?**

Any resources of the applicant are considered in determining his need for financial assistance. Any income of the applicant, any savings, real property in excess of that used as a home, and the income in the home in which the applicant or recipient lives will also be considered.

**After the application is made and reviewed, what is the next step?**

If the county department of public welfare finds that an applicant is in need of financial assistance, the social information and medical reports are sent to the State Board of Public Welfare in Raleigh. There the case is reviewed by a consulting physician who determines whether the person is totally and permanently disabled as defined in law and policy. If the person is found to be eligible, he will begin receiving a monthly check.

**Should the recipient keep in touch with the county department of public welfare?**

Yes. He is responsible for discussing with the caseworker his situation from time to time in order to determine whether or not he is still eligible to receive assistance. He is also responsible for notifying the caseworker of any change in address or any other change in his situation, such as an increase or decrease in his needs or income.

**Does the county department of public welfare review the cases from time to time?**

Yes. Active cases are reviewed periodically to determine if eligibility continues to exist and



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## Farm Facts

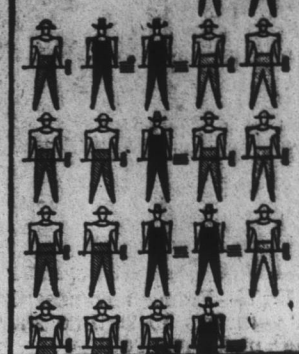
Because fewer than one out of eight people in the United States now live on a farm, some people are inclined to discount the importance of agriculture.

Farmers, however, are a part of our biggest single industry, sometimes called "agribusiness." More than 22 million workers are involved in it. This constitutes about a third of the total labor force. About 7.5 million of these are on farms, another 6 million are in farm supply businesses, and 9 million are employed in processing and distributing agricultural products.

This huge industry, at the same time, is contributing to the record levels of employment now being enjoyed in this country. The expenditure of farmers for labor, farm machinery, fuel, feed, fertilizer, insecticides, and other production items increased from \$6.4 billion a year during 1937-41 to \$25.1 billion in 1958.

The farmer's capital, estimated at \$200 billion, is put to work to generate billions more in new wealth each

More than 22 million workers...one-third of the total labor force...are employed in agriculture and its industries.



year. He produces food and fiber valued at an estimated \$33 billion. This goes to pricing many processors for storage, processing, and merchandising—services amounting to \$47 billion. Consumers pay more than \$80 billion for the finished products.

### Christmas Treats From The Kitchen

Only a few days remain until Christmas and there are still house cleaning jobs to be done, gifts to buy and preparations to be made for the friends that will be dropping by.

Miss Iola Pritchard, food conservation specialist for the N. C.

to determine the current extent of need. Emphasis is placed on helping disabled persons help themselves to the full extent possible.

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Agricultural Extension Service, suggests that you give of yourself along with your gift this year. "What could be a better and more acceptable way of making someone happy than to give some jars of delicious home canned foods," says Miss Pritchard. "There are probably many families on your list who were unable to conserve any food

this year and would welcome some relish, pickles, preserves, jellies or just canned fruits and vegetables."

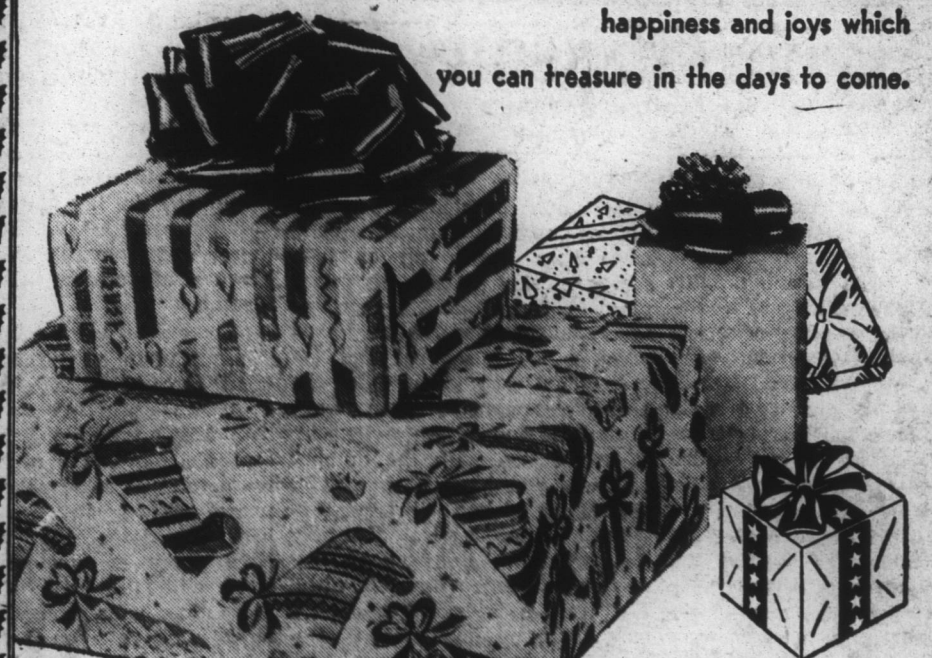
"A good conserved product that is properly packaged and wrapped will be a welcome gift in any home," says Miss Pritchard. "Try a few assorted standard jars of food fitted into a box and wrapped in some of

the attractive packaging materials on the market. Add ribbons, berries or artificial decorations to make the box look festive and Christmas-like when opened."

Let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action. —Shakespeare.

# a happy christmas

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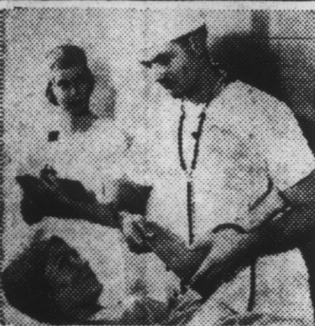
In addition to the poultry and livestock Chows above, Purina makes dog, goat, rabbit, pigeon, guinea pig, game bird, laboratory animal, etc. rations.

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