

SENATOR SAM ERVIN SAYS



In this year when inflation is running wild, the problems of buying a home, owning an automobile, and eating meat every week are increasingly the concerns of millions of Americans.

Across the nation, parents will soon find that inflation has affected not only the school lunch program and the cost of meals that their children will eat in cafeterias, but clothing and supplies necessary to equip their children for the educational process.

With real estate and home values climbing monthly and mortgage interest rates reaching the highest level in our country's history—9½ percent—and the prospect of even higher costs, many Americans are losing hope of owning their own homes and many other material comforts.

Shortages of food and fuel show no sign of easing soon. Indeed, experts warn that these shortages are only a taste of what is yet to come. With commodity troubles growing round the world, many predict that the industrial nations are bumping against the limits of resources we have long taken for granted. Newsprint, baling wire, tallow, sawdust, and a multitude of foods are in short supply. Wheat recently sold on mercantile exchanges at more than \$5 per bushel. Other food grains have reached all time highs. While the Administration should not be blamed for uncontrollable agricultural conditions, it is now generally recognized that the sale of U. S. grain to the Soviets last year contributed greatly to our present food problems.

Having set in motion a multitude of complex policies in 1972 which have affected our economy, the Administration has yet to devise any policy to extricate us from inflation or the shortages which confront us at every turn. One thing for certain is that "cost of living controls" have not worked very well in a trillion dollar economy. Even so, since the Administration chose to travel that road it will not be easy to get rid of wage-price regulations. THE DRAFT—In contrast to the Administration and many individuals who advocated an all-volunteer army, I was one of those who said that the ending of the draft would endanger our national security. On August 28, 1970, I issued a statement warning that there was serious doubt that we could maintain our military manpower requirements under such a system. I pointed out that the most noticeable result would be that it would add immensely to the cost of our defense at a time when the Federal budget is already incurring a deficit of many billions of dollars. My doubts have now been confirmed.

The all-volunteer system has now been in effect since February and the figures now in are far from assuring that we will have an adequate source of enlistments. In spite of billions of dollars of pay increases, the Air Force, Navy and Marines have barely met their quotas in recent months, and the Army, which relied on the draft for manpower for many years, has consistently fallen below its recruiting goal for the past six months. Enlistments in the Guard and Reserves are also at

low levels.

As an editorial writer for the Minneapolis Tribune stated the problem succinctly: "The all-volunteer armed force seems to us an idea whose time should not have come."

Shortages of capable recruits comes at a critical time when it is evident that we will need a strong national defense in the years ahead. According to Jane's Fighting Ships, the authoritative British publication on naval power, the Soviet Union has now taken over the lead in overall naval strength and is challenging the U. S. Navy in the Mediterranean and elsewhere.

The hard fact is that we need adequate military and particularly naval strength to insure that our vital sea lanes are open to transport petroleum and other essential raw materials to keep our economy intact.

This is a matter that will require increasing attention in the years ahead.

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