

Starting Drive Against Profiteering in State

Fair Price Committees Are Appointed And Margin of Profits Announced to Become Effective When Congress Passes Lever Food Control Amendment.

The naming of Fair Price Committees in Wake and other counties of the State sets in motion the United States machinery in the State for the control of profits and the consequent reduction in living costs.

Under ruling announced by Food Administrator Henry A. Page, drafted back into the service after several months relief from his dollar-a-year job, 15 per cent profit is regarded as fair for the retailer of meat, sugar, and flour; 25 per cent for the retailer of other foodstuffs, and 33 1/3 per cent for the retailer of clothing and the like. Of course, this announcement of Mr. Page is conditioned upon the Senate's adoption of the Lever food-control amendment.

Mr. Page has called upon all the county food administrators in the State to name fair-price committees, who will be composed of one retailer of groceries, one retailer of dry-goods, one representative of the producers, one representative of organized labor, one representative of the purchasing public, and one representative of the wholesale grocers.

There will be no placarding of windows, no closing of doors for one day or a period of days, no contributions to the Red Cross by way of penalties under the new order. It will be a grim matter of courts and juries for the violators of the law. The Department of Justice will look after these little matters.

Mr. Page makes the following explanation of the function of the committees:

"The county fair-price committee is a legal body, appointed through the machinery of the Food Administration, and acting under the direction of the Attorney General of the United States for the Department of Justice.

"It is intended to procure information of profiteering, hoarding, etc., of food and clothing, and to correct same by admonition and reproof as far as possible, and to report dealers who will not act in harmony with them to the Department of Justice, through the Federal Food Administrator for North Carolina. If an involved and intricate situation presents itself which deserves and demands outside help, by reason of its importance, upon request a secret-service agent will be sent to make the investigation.

"It is believed that many retailers of food, clothing and shoes are exacting excessive and unreasonable margins of profit, and that a close investigation of costs and selling prices should at once be made. This is the special task assigned to the county fair-price committee. Profits should be figured in percentages of cost of goods, thus eliminating the whole question of the varying expense of doing business, such as labor, rents, etc., inasmuch as cost of goods has advanced with corresponding advances in labor, rents, etc.

"Fair and Just Profit."

"In the matter of profits on food, the following figures are suggestions, not as fixed percentages, but they may be found valuable by you as guides: The three staple foods—meat, sugar, and flour—are to be separated from other foods in considering profits, because custom and the habit of dealers themselves have fixed the permissible reasonable margin on these products at less than half the profit which may be reasonably charged on average food products.

"Pre-war competitive conditions afforded margins on these three staples of less than five per cent to the wholesaler, and not more than fifteen per cent to the retailer. This is a fair and just measure of reasonable profit or margin above cost now. On all other food products the same test would allow an average margin of ten per cent to the wholesaler and twenty-five per cent to the retailer. There is no reasonable excuse for exceeding these margins now.

"There should be no 'resale within a trade'—that is, no multiplication of the agencies of distribution. Whole sale dealers should buy from manufacturers and producers, and not from other wholesale dealers. Retailers should buy from wholesale dealers, and not from other retailers. There should be but three agencies above the consumer—one producer or manufacturer, one wholesale dealer, and one retail dealer. Merchants who for any reason are not in position to buy wisely and on as good terms as their competitors should get out of business, because they are the direct cause of an unnecessary increase in cost to the consumer.

Add 33 1/3 Per cent. "I do not believe it will be found wise in many counties to publish a fair-price list covering many commodities, because of differing conditions, but this is a matter wholly in

the discretion of the fair-price committee. It seems to me that percentages of profit or margin over cost is a better plan than flat selling prices.

"In many cases investigation will disclose the fact that a retail merchant has paid too much for goods, as illustrated by recent experience in sugar, caused by something of a scarcity and consequent hoarding for higher price. In such cases he should be allowed to sell at a reasonable advance over cost to him, and investigate the seller. This can usually be done by agents of the department in other States.

"In reference to reasonable profits, or margins over cost in shoes, clothing, and furnishings, it is to be noted that these products are usually purchased by the retailer directly from the manufacturers, and only one profit or margin—that of the retailer—is to be added to the manufacturer's selling price.

"As a guide and suggestion to the committee, I beg to say that it seems fair and just to accept the pre-war custom and policy of retail dealers of clothing, shoes, etc., as reasonable and just now. It seems pretty well established that the trade under competitive conditions permitted the addition of a margin of 33 1/3 per cent to cost as a fair selling price."

LADIES OF WILMINGTON WILL OPERATE MEAT MARKET.

Housewives Hold Meeting to Decide Details of Co-operative Market.

Wilmington, N. C., Aug. 27.—Wilmington housewives held a meeting yesterday to decide on details for establishing and operating a co-operative meat market. A thousand members with about \$2 each will start the effort to defeat the high cost of living in this way. The women of the city considered the subject six months ago but failed to get organized. This time they are determined to put the thing through. Already a property owner has offered a business house free of rent to the housewives. Practically no fresh meat of any cut is sold here for less than 30 cents, much of it at 35 cents, and the best cuts from 40 to 55 cents. It has been charged that on not a single scrap that comes out of a beef is the price as low as the price paid per pound for the beef at the packing houses.

ST. LOUIS NEWSWRITERS BENEFIT BY ORGANIZATION.

St. Louis, Mo., Aug. 27.—Newspaper writers of this city, who recently organized themselves into a labor union, have just been granted a bonus of 20 per cent on salaries for the period between January 1st and August 22d of this year by the Pulitzer Publishing Company, publishers of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. It was announced that another bonus of 20 per cent, dating from August 22nd would be given at the end of the year.

DELAWARE CARPENTERS SECURE INCREASE.

Wilmington, Del., Aug. 27.—In the wage dispute between Carpenters' Union No. 626 and employers, an arbitrator has ruled that rates shall be 80 cents an hour. Wages were 70 cents at the beginning of the year and the carpenters asked for 75 cents. Action was delayed and they struck. The contractors agreed to 75 cents and pledged themselves to arbitrate the difference between these figures and the carpenters' demand.

DON'T SCARE ACTORS.

Striking actors of New York are not scared at the managers' threat to close every theater, since the stage employees and musicians have joined in the strike.

Commenting on this move by the managers, Frank Gillmore, executive secretary of the Actors' Equity Association, said:

"I can only say that that will not alter our resolution to stick until final victory is assured. I wish to remind the managers that a theater remains a theater only so long as actors are performing there. Without actors the theater is nothing but a building. The actors' talents can be as easily exercised in a hall, in a tent, or even in a vacant lot. The public will gather to see the actor, no matter where he acts.

"Therefore, if the theaters are closed to us, we shall organize companies to tour the country, just as Mrs. Fiske and Mme. Bernhardt did when a powerful trust discriminated against them."

UNION MEN CLAIM POLICE FIRED FIRST

Death List in Charlotte Troubles Total Five; Eleven Others in Hospital Expected to Recover.

With five dead and eight wounded as a result of rioting at the car barns of the Southern Public Utilities Company in Charlotte, which interrupted a street car strike of two weeks running in that city, organized labor in the Mecklenburg city has turned on the city officials with blame for the disorder and Wednesday petitions were in circulation for the recall of the commissioners.

Mayor McNinch has shown "complete inability" to deal with a critical situation, according to the Charlotte labor men, and it is time to turn the city government over to some one else. According to the News and Observer's staff correspondent "Feeling against the city authorities, particularly within labor circles, is growing in intensity and the recall of the three men, Mayor Frank B. McNinch, Commissioner of Public Safety George A. Page, and Commissioner of Public Works Arthur H. Wearn, is demanded on the ground of incompetency and neglect in the performance of their duties.

Union men are insisting that the action of the police in firing upon the crowd was too hasty, was not called for, and that a number of those shot were hit in the back.

Outstanding Features of Day. The zealous circulation of this paper (Continued on page two.)

TOBACCO WORKERS GAINING STRENGTH

Nearly All Big Factories in Winston-Salem Have Signed Agreement With the Union.

Winston-Salem, N. C., Aug. 26.—The Bohannon brothers, Taylor brothers, Bailey brothers, Brown-Williamson and Flint tobacco companies have followed the lead of the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. in granting their union employees an eight-hour day with time and one-half for overtime, which affects 11,000 tobacco workers in this city. These workers are joining the Tobacco Workers' union, which is rapidly reaching a 100 per cent basis. Negotiations in this movement were conducted by President McAndrew, of the international Tobacco Workers' Union, and the conciliatory attitude of officers of the R. J. Reynolds Company was a large factor in securing an adjustment of this question and avoiding a strike.

The organization theory is now accepted at Durham, N. C., where two locals of tobacco workers have been formed. At Reidsville the tobacco workers are also uniting.

ABOUT FLOUR.

A miller tells me that a barrel of flour now make about 330 loaves of bread. At 10c a loaf this means \$33 for a barrel of flour. It means nearly \$7.00 for a bushel of wheat. The farmer gets from \$1.90 to \$2.10. Who is the profiteer?—Exchange.

LABOR TROUBLES.

His Better-Half—(regarding him from the bedroom window—"Where you bin this 'hour of the night?") "I've bin at me union, considerin' this 'ere strike." "Well, you can stay down there an' consider this 'ere lockout."—Tit-Bits.

Labor Day, 1919

By Frank Morrison, Secretary American Federation of Labor

Labor Day, 1919, the organized workers possess greater intelligence and confidence in themselves than at any other period.

The trade union movement was true to its historic mission in the great war that defeated a military autocracy, and it has not forgotten the plea, "Make the World Safe for Democracy," that so successfully united the people of our country in one purpose.

The organized workers will continue their efforts to make our country safe for democracy, though certain other elements of our citizenship have abandoned this plea in their desire for material gain, regardless of effects on the nation's life.

The workers' determination is indicated in their demand that the purchasing power of their wages permit them to meet present living costs. The workers have not forgotten praises showered on them during the war, and they now insist that living standards shall not be lowered. They point to Government statistics, which show that over \$1.80 is now necessary to purchase goods that were priced at \$1 before the war.

The railroad solution offered by organized railroad shopmen and the railroad brotherhoods and supported by the American Federation of Labor as a whole, and the declaration of the Policy Committee of the United Mine Workers of America for the nationalization of coal mines under democratic management, are also indicative of the workers' determination to make our country safe for democracy.

Government reports show that there are 8,500,000 persons over 10 years of age in this country who cannot read nor write the English language. It seems unnecessary to urge

that our educational system be revised, that this illiteracy menace to a government "of, by and for the people" be removed.

Another policy that would make this country safe for democracy is organized labor's demand that immigration be stopped until such time as those aliens who are now in this country can be assimilated. Sentiment must give way to the dictates of self-preservation when national needs and social aspirations are threatened by waves of cheap-labor employers.

The proposed plan to "Americanize the alien" will not be successful while industry is conducted along autocratic lines.

The attempt to solve this question by company "unions," welfare work and beneficial features will not suffice. None of these contain the element of fundamental democracy. The alien must be Americanized, but industries like the steel trust, that make the alien possible, must first be Americanized. These business men must be Americanized. The American spirit of freedom and equality cannot be aroused in a worker who is denied the right of free speech, or who has been discharged because he does a lawful thing—joins a trade union.

On this fundamental trade union movement stands. It is idle to talk of Americanizing the alien or of establishing democracy in industry while an industrial oligarchy ignores guarantees in the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution.

The trade union movement stands for the highest order of Americanism, and it believes that the first step in Americanizing the alien is to Americanize the job.

PRINTERS RAISE WAGES.

New Haven, Conn., Aug. 27.—The Typographical Union has compromised its wage demand for newspaper members. The new rates are \$30 a week for day work and \$33 for night work.

Duluth, Minn., Aug. 27.—Members of the Typographical Union employed on newspapers have raised wages 28 per cent and reduced the work week three hours, or to seven and one-half a day.

The old scale was \$20 a week for day work and \$31 for night work. The new rates are \$36 and \$39, with retroactive pay dating from July 1. The union is now negotiating a new scale for commercial shops.

Tulsa, Okla., Aug. 27.—Newspaper printers have raised wages to \$42 a week for day and \$45 for night work.

TEXTILE WORKERS PUT DENT IN "SOLID SOUTH"

Chattanooga, Tenn., Aug. 26.—What is believed to be the first unqualified closed-shop agreement in a Southern textile mill has been signed between Local Union 1086, United Textile Workers of America, and the Champion Knitting Mills.

The agreement provides for a closed shop, a 54-hour week, the prevailing scale of wages and many features new to textile workers of Chattanooga and the South. The Champion Knitting Mills is a new company which begins operations here this month. Chattanooga capital is behind the enterprise. The product will bear the label of the United Textile Workers.

Meetings of local textile unions are well attended, and the unions are enthusiastic over the outlook for the future of unionism in Chattanooga mills.

Preacher Criticises Laboring People and Praises Capitalist

Admits That Money Influences His Attitude, and he is Not Going to Bite the Hand That Evidently Fed Him.

Considerable comment has been raised over the fact that a preacher admitted, in a letter read at the State Labor Convention, that coercion was being practiced on the preachers in some cotton-mill towns by the owners of the mill property, forcing the preachers to preach along certain lines. A general denial has been made and the claim advanced that there is no truth in the statement, for it is unbelievable that any mill owner would withdraw support from any preacher under such conditions. The following, from The Albemarle News, is sufficient evidence of undue influence, certainly in the case of the Rev. Hughes:

"Editor The News:

"I want to write up the strike in all its phases, exposing the guilty ones for bringing on such conditions as now exist in your fair city. After two years pastorate of the First Street Church, which exists by reason of the Wisconsin people, and observing the extraordinary generosity of Mr. Cannon and all his associates to make life worth while, and all conditions conducive to the very best interest of all concerned in every way that brain and money could produce and effect as a bonus over and above a fair wage, I cannot appreciate the conduct of the strikers, but brand such as base ingratitude and evidencing the presence of the spirit of the detestable Hun.

"Sincerely,
"W. I. HUGHES."

This preacher appears to be unable to differentiate between the different elements displaying the "spirit of the detestable Hun," for an analysis

of his writing shows he is upon the side and lined up with the Hun element he writes about, for he must surely know that it is the generous owners that promise to pay a certain bonus under certain conditions. This bonus proposition has a string tied to it in the shape of a forfeiture, the general rule being that if an employee loses as much as fifteen minutes in a week, he loses half of the week's bonus, and should he lose for any cause as much as half an hour, all of it. Does this preacher not know that the proprietors own the property in which the operatives live, and that the terror of eviction and discharge are hanging over them all the time? Does not this preacher know that the conditions under which these people live, compared with slavery days, is only the difference between the operative receiving a certain wage based upon piece work, which the slave did not get, and the fact that the body of the slave could be sold, while that of the operative cannot? But the operative can be discharged and run off the property if the will of the master is not obeyed. This preacher should understand that there is plenty of room in hell, and that when the time comes many of the supposed "generous" persons will not be denied admission, and it will hardly be denied that there will be a generous sprinkling of prattling preachers among them. It is indeed a pity that some of our so-called preachers cannot realize that they were not called to preach, and that the warts on their bodies are really not heads.

GREAT MASS-MEETING OF FARMERS.

Called by American Cotton Association, to Be Held in New Orleans in September.

Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 27.—For the purpose of discussing the high cost of living, the general economic conditions affecting cotton producers, and to recommend a minimum price for cotton, a great mass-meeting will be held in New Orleans, La., September 8th and 9th, having been called by Southern Governors and the American Cotton Association, through its president, J. Skottowe Wannamaker, St. Matthew's, S. C. The call has just been issued from the Atlanta membership campaign headquarters of the organization.

To date, the following State chief executives have signed the joint proclamation: Gov. Hugh H. Dorsey, of Georgia; Gov. Thomas R. Kilby, of Alabama; Gov. Charles H. Brough, of Florida; Gov. Sidney J. Catts, of Arkansas; Gov. A. H. Roberts, of Tennessee; Gov. Robert A. Cooper, of South Carolina, and Gov. William P. Hobby, of Texas.

The proclamation follows: "Whereas, the President of the United States, in his address to the Congress of the United States on August 8, 1919, has called attention to grave conditions of distress confronting large numbers of our people by reason of constantly rising living costs, due to the perversion of the ordinary laws of supply and demand, and to the activities of speculators and profiteers in the necessities of life; and

"Whereas, these conditions are of special concern to the people of the Southern States, in view of their absolute dependence upon the cotton industry as the basis of their well-being, and especially in view of the fact that cotton prices have entirely failed to keep pace with the prices of manufactured products and other commodities which they must buy;

"Therefore, we, as Governors of the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, in association with the president of the American Cotton Association, do hereby summon representative farmers, merchants, bankers, business and professional men from our several States, hereinbefore named, to confer together in the city of New Orleans, La., on the 8th and 9th of September, and to study, on behalf of the people of the South, ways and means of dealing with such prices as they relate to the life and comfort of our people; and

"In particular, to study such conditions as they relate to the cotton industry as a whole to the determination of a fair and just price for cotton, based upon considerations of supply and demand and the price of manufactured products of cotton."

STRIKE WAS A FRAME-UP.

Engineered by Company Officials and Pulled Off by Company "Union."

New York, Aug. 27.—A strike on the Interborough Rapid Transit Company's lines, engineered by company officials and its company "union," is the latest thing in strikes.

The company is antagonistic to the bona fide Street Car Men's union, and has organized its own "union," whose members quit to enforce higher wages. Trade unionists declare that the strike was a "frame up" to raise car fares, and point to the number of strikers who were employed by the company to protect its property. It is also declared that the company paid the expenses of the strike committee while the walk-out was being arranged.

The "union" has a contract with the company and these workers refused every offer of mediation. Public officials announce that they will investigate the strike, and it is evident that the company is in a weaker position to enforce its demand for a higher fare.

In an editorial, the New York World says "it is plain to everybody that the company virtually welcomed the strike." This newspaper calls attention to the employment of what it terms "a privately organized union" to protect the company's property.

BOSTON COPS ARE NOW IN A UNION.

Boston, Mass.—With a policemen's union organized despite his orders, Police Commissioner Edwin U. Curtis is expected to take action in connection with his announcement that patrolmen who joined the union would be liable to discharge or suspension. The union, which is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, has between 1,300 and 1,400 members. The force numbers 1,500.

The union has made no demands. The question involved at present is the right to organize, the commissioner maintaining that policemen are public officials rather than employees, and membership in a union is not compatible with their duties. Union officials stated that the question of a strike had not been considered. The Central Labor Union, however, has voted the policemen support to the extent of a sympathetic strike of 80,000 workers if necessary.

PAINTERS JOIN UNION.

Lafayette, Ind., Aug. 27.—The Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers is headed toward the 100,000 mark. A membership of 93,381 at the close of June is reported. During that month 3,331 were added to the membership roll.