

Prices Of Food Products Expected To Soar In 1948

Washington, D. C.—The nation's workers, already forced to do without foods because of high prices, found an encouragement in a prediction on prices and food supplies for 1948 issued by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

The bureau's forecast indicated higher prices were on the way for several commodities, some of which appeared headed toward peak levels reached during and after World War II.

On livestock and meats, the bureau said prices probably will continue high and meat production was expected to drop about 10 pounds per person from the 1947 average per capita rate of 155 pounds.

Egg and poultry prices also are expected to average higher than this year, and dairy products may be higher the first six months of next year than in the first half of 1947. There may be a drop in the last half, the bureau said.

Prices of wheat, which in Chicago soared to the highest mark for the December future delivery since 1917, were forecast by the bureau to be governed largely by the size of next year's crop. Export demand was expected to continue large until the middle of 1949. December wheat at one time this week was quoted at \$3.10 1/2 bushel while in the cash market No. 2 red wheat was sold for \$3.16 1/2, the highest price since 1920.

The bureau's outlook on corn and other livestock feeds was that prices were expected to average higher than this year and because of this year's poor corn crop the total feed supplies would be smaller.

Prices for potatoes early in 1948 probably will be higher than last winter, the bureau said, while continued high prices were predicted for wool during the first half of next year. Fruit prices were expected to be about the same as this year. Moderately lower prices were foreseen in a larger rye crop, while somewhat lower prices also were predicted for commercial truck crops.

As wheat at Chicago and other big markets continued its upward trend, there was another increase in bakery flour prices at Minneapolis, moving 10 cents higher per hundred pounds to \$7.85. Also on the upgrade in markets were rubber, scrap steel, cocoa, butter, lamb, corn, rye and cotton. In the livestock markets prices of hogs, cattle and oats declined.

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WOLL ASKS RELIEF FOR LOW INCOME GROUPS Congress Urged To Revise Minimum Wage Act

CONGRESS STRONGLY URGED TO RAISE MINIMUM WAGE TO 75 CENTS AN HOUR.

Washington, D. C.—The AFL strongly urged Congress to immediately raise the minimum wage to 75 cents an hour and to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to extend its coverage to workers now excluded by the wording of the original law.

Walter Mason, national legislative representative for the AFL, in testimony before the House Committee on Education and Labor, presented the AFL's policy on minimum wage legislation as adopted at the recent convention and attacked those who are opposed to the upward revision of the minimum wage level.

Referring to the national wage policy adopted by Congress with passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, a policy which recognized a legal obligation to maintain the minimum standard of living necessary for the health, efficiency, and general well-being of the nation's workers, Mr. Mason declared:

"I am calling upon the members of this committee to face reality—to acknowledge that the present 40-cent-an-hour minimum rate no longer carries out our national wage policy and to take the corrective action necessary to make this policy effective. The American Federation of Labor is proposing an immediate increase in the minimum wage to 75 cents an hour. We do not feel that this proposed minimum will provide the standard of living contemplated by the original act. It is, however, what is needed immediately to correct the gross inequities which now exist."

In answer to critics who have forecast dire effects for the nation's economy if the minimum wage is increased, Mason declared that such an increase would have two beneficial results:

"First, the productivity of the individual worker who had been receiving substandard wages will increase. You may ask why this should happen. The answer is very simple. Workers receiving a substandard wage cannot be ex-

pected to contribute to their full extent to the welfare of the enterprise. Because of the low wages, they cannot provide themselves or their families with adequate food, housing or clothing. The individual worker in such conditions is easily fatigued, has a very low morale and because of his other worries cannot contribute the full measure of his capabilities. With a minimum wage which will provide a decent standard of living his productivity naturally rises.

"Secondly, the imposition of the minimum wage will mean greater managerial efficiency. Since in most cases, substandard wages have been a subsidy to the less efficient producers at the expense of the workers, the effect of the minimum wage will fall heaviest on those less efficient producers. It will thus force these operators to re-examine their methods of doing business so that they can maintain the same level of costs as their competitors. In other words, the minimum wage will force producers to improve the efficiency of their operations."

In addition to increasing the wage level to 75 cents an hour, Mason urged extension of the law's coverage to include seamen, employes of retail and service establishments with an annual volume of business amounting to

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U. S. Labor Praised By Wm. Green

New York City.—AFL President William Green, in a prepared broadcast for use on the State Department's "Voice of America" program beamed to Russia, emphasized the freedom enjoyed by American workers in political matters, in the selection of their unions, and in the determination of their nation's policies.

The program consisted of a series of questions put to Mr. Green which brought out the basic differences between the labor movement under a democratic government and under a totalitarian regime. For purposes of the broadcast, the Nazi system was chosen as an example of the totalitarian form of government.

On the general question of the basic difference between a democratic labor organization and the Nazi totalitarian labor movement, Mr. Green said:

"Basically the difference was between freedom and slavery. A democratic labor organization like the American Federation of Labor is free and self-governing. Its policies are determined by the members themselves and its activities are carried on by union officials elected by the members. Certainly the AFL is completely free of government domination and control. Frequently we are opposed to government labor policies and we do not hesitate to express our opposition.

"Now contrast this free system with the slave conditions which Hitler imposed upon German labor. First, he destroyed the free labor unions of the Reich, confiscating their property and imprisoning their leaders. Then he organized a labor front, which the government compelled workers to join. These workers had no voice in the selection of the directors of labor nor did they have any say over such fundamental policies as wages and working conditions."

In reply to a question on political matters and the freedom of workers to express themselves and exercise their right to vote, Mr. Green reiterated the AFL's, non-partisan political policy. He said:

"In our country the unions are free to support whatever party they favor and of course all union members enjoy the same freedom.

"The American Federation of Labor itself has consistently followed a nonpartisan political policy and has refrained from giving a blanket endorsement to any political parties whose records convince us that they are friendly to the cause of organized labor. Nor do our unions attempt to influence their members to support any particular political party."

"We have confidence in the (Continued on Page 4)

FOOD PRICES AT NEW PEAK AND CLIMBING

New York City.—The difficulty of making ends meet because of the soaring cost of living has added a further complicating factor in American family relationships, already dislocated because of wartime conditions, the Family Service association reported.

In a survey of 114 family service agencies in American cities, all affiliated with the FSAA, 96 have noted that mounting living costs had increased the number of problems families have brought to the agencies in recent months.

In discussing the report, Frank J. Hertel, general director of the FSAA, said that the current abnormal economic situation is causing not only short-term family problems but

is sowing seeds for the future, since "children growing up in an atmosphere of frustration and uncertainty in one generation tend to carry over the same instability of home life in the next."

Marginal income families are the most affected, but the report noted that many higher-income families for the first time are seeking agency assistance. Among the difficulties noted are inability to pay for needed medical care, improper diet, increase in the number of mothers going to work and inability to pay for proper day care for children of working mothers, inadequate housing, children leaving school to help support families, exhaustion of savings and mounting debts.

Board Decides On Bargaining Unit

Washington, D. C.—The first decision under the Taft-Hartley law on the question of what constitutes a proper bargaining unit was rendered by the National Labor Relations Board.

The board followed policy established under the old Wagner act and carried forward in the new law. It dismissed the petition of the AFL's Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for an election among twenty employes of the French Broad Electric Mem-

bership Corporation at Marshall, N. C.

Board members held that the unit was too small because it failed to include the company's twenty-one other employes at Burnsville and Bakersville, N. C.

The N. L. R. B. assumed jurisdiction of the case on the ground that the co-operative utility, owned wholly by its customers, sold \$2,980 worth of power across the state line in Tennessee and brought 40 per cent of \$131,000 in supplies from sources outside North Carolina.

AFL CONVENTION URGES ACTION TO BRING ABOUT WORK HOLIDAY ON ELECTION DAY

The AFL convention at its session in San Francisco voted unanimously to use all practical means possible to bring about the observance of election day as a legal holiday in order that all workers may have the necessary time to vote.

In place of several resolutions introduced on the subject, the delegates voted for a substitute report submitted by the Committee on Resolutions which supported the policy "of mobilizing labor's strength so that it can be made most effective on election day."

The committee report is as follows: "In connection with election day, your committee recognizes the fact that the primaries are of equal importance to election day, for it is then that he candidates for public office are chosen. In many Southern States the selection of candidates in the primaries assures their election.

"To secure legislation making either primaries, or election day, or both, legal holidays presents difficulties which may not be immediately overcome. Your committee recommends that the American Federation of Labor and State Federations of Labor apply all practical means possible to establish election day as a legal holiday, and in states where the primaries are the determining factor that primary day be made a legal holiday.

URGES HIGHER PERSONAL EXEMPTIONS AND THE REPEAL OF EXCISE TAXES

Washington, D. C.—Matthew Woll, AFL Executive Council member, charged that the majority report of the Special Tax Study committee appointed by Chairman Knutson of the House Ways and Means committee, would, if enacted, "shift the tax load from those more able to those less able to bear the burden."

Mr. Woll's charge was made in a minority report which he submitted to the House Committee in the belief that the majority report is contrary to the "best interests of the nation and the welfare of our people."

Mr. Woll pointed out that the majority of the special committee refrained from submitting recommendations on income tax rates and exemptions on the theory that such matters are the prerogative of the House Committee on Ways and Means. He said, however, that the committee proceeded to make 33 recommendations for specific changes in income tax provisions of the Internal Revenue code.

The net result of these recommendations, he said, "would wreck the effectiveness of the surtax on individuals, almost as devastatingly as any surtax scale revision that might have been contemplated." He added:

"Their purpose seems to be to attain by indirect and complex means the result of income tax cutting for the favored few which they do not dare recommend by an outright reduction in surtax rates."

Mr. Woll criticized the majority report for its failure to take cognizance of the revenue requirements of the Marshall plan for aid to Europe and for other essential expenditures of the Government. He declared:

"There is no indication in the majority report of what the net tax loss would be. It is certainly reckless tax planning to make recommendations without knowing the cost."

Mr. Woll found in a majority recommendation "that the excise tax structure be retained and strengthened," a step in the direction of a Federal sales tax which would constitute an unfair and capricious burden on consumers and businessmen alike.

He concluded that the 46 major proposals of the majority would

be of slight application to persons with incomes of less than \$5,000 a year which comprise 96 1-2 per cent of the taxpayers. In this respect he said:

"The program of the majority is consistent with the across-the-board percentage program for reducing income tax rates and the proposals now being made by certain groups for some form of a Federal sales tax."

On the proposal to allow all married couples to divide their incomes for tax purposes, Mr. Woll pointed out that this would be of particular benefit only to couples with incomes above \$5,000 and urged that such action be taken only after reduction of taxes on low incomes and the elimination of certain excise taxes.

Mr. Woll presented a positive program for tax revision which called for the increasing of personal exemptions for low income taxpayers, elimination of excise taxes on 10 commodities, and the plugging of existing loopholes in the tax laws.

He recommended that "the highest priority be given in any program for reduction of individual income taxes to increasing personal exemptions, and that \$2.5 billions of revenue reduction be utilized immediately to grant such relief to the lowest income groups."

On the subject of excise taxes, he urged the immediate repeal of the tax now levied on oleomargarine, transportation of persons and property, electric light bulbs, matches, women's purses, toilet preparations, and lubricating oil. In addition Mr. Woll recommended cutting the tax on admissions and on telephone and telegraph service by 50 per cent.

N. Y. Firms Face Serious Charges

Washington, D. C.—In another action designed to stamp out the trend toward monopoly control by big business interests, the Justice Department charged that 17 New York investment bankers have a stranglehold on the nation's security business.

Attorney General Tom C. Clark announced that a suit had been instituted in the New York Federal Court charging the bankers with violations of the anti-trust laws in handling 69 per cent of the stock and bonds issued during the last

nine years, and valued at \$14 billion.

The Government asked for injunctions against the banking houses and their partners, and asked also that the Investment Bankers Association of America be broken up by court order.

The Government suit accused the bankers of conspiring to dominate the stock and bond business by fixing the prices and terms of new issues, and by strangling competitive bidding.

The bankers were charged with conspiring not to compete (Continued On Page 4)

Doherty Urges Raises For Letter Carriers

Washington, D. C.—William C. Doherty, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers and an AFL Executive Council member, called upon Congress for the prompt revision of the Civil Service Retirement Law to provide higher annuity payments for retired employes.

In an editorial in the November issue of the association's journal, The Postal Record, Doherty protested the "stolid indifference" shown by Congress in return for the voluntary relinquishment by the letter carriers of their right to strike or to engage in collective bargaining procedures.

Mr. Doherty stated that the retirement law, as amended from time to time, is a good law "basically" but "the annuities under the law today simply will not permit retired

letter carriers to do much more than exist."

"The Langer-Chavez bills, introduced in the first session of the 80th Congress, would have gone a long way toward correcting this inequity. Simple justice demanded that a liberalized retirement bill be enacted. It is needless to point out at this time that letter carriers are still waiting for the passage of such a bill.

"It is not a question of striking against our Government; we have never entertained the idea. Moreover, we never will. So far, so good. But why in the name of social justice and fair play, must our retired men be compelled to struggle on through the sunset of their lives on a totally inadequate annuity? The 'quid pro quo' we receive for our for- (Continued On Page 4)