

Housewives Partly Guilty For High Retail Prices Of Processed Foods

By DOUGLAS LARSEN
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WASHINGTON—(NEA)—Congress is investigating the possibility that retail food prices are not coming down as fast as farm prices because American housewives are getting lazy.

Evidence that this is true has already been laid before the Senate agriculture subcommittee on utilization of farm crops, headed by Sen. Guy M. Gillette (D. Iowa). Gillette's group is going into the whole question of why the cost of getting food from the farmer to the consumer seems to have increased out of proportion to farm prices and the general price rise since the war.

When the investigation was stated last summer the committee expected to find increased efficiency in the food distribution system and possibly exorbitant profits being taken by the food middlemen. They have found some evidence of both of these things. But they have also discovered that U. S. housewives must share some guilt for keeping food prices up.

What it amounts to, the modern woman is demanding food from the grocery store which is all ready to throw into the pot or frying pan, with an absolute minimum of working on by her. She wants more canned goods and ready-prepared foods. She wants her fresh vegetables already trimmed, washed and sorted before they are even put on the grocery counter.

Wants To Save Labor

She wants food put up in smaller packages, to serve two or three persons, so she doesn't have to bother to measure or save what's left. She wants processed foods and bread with a lot of built-in vitamins, so she doesn't have to worry about balanced diets. She wants only the choice cuts of meat, already trimmed and prepared by the butcher, so she doesn't have to improvise cooking methods and seasoning to improve flavor. She wants "instant" coffee and "instant" potatoes which require the minimum cooking skill of boiling water.

Since the war, the food industry has had to cater to this changing demand. Food processors have told Gillette's group that these newfangled services don't come for free.

It costs money to put extra vitamins in bread. Putting up foods in smaller cartons means extra cardboard, paper and cellophane. Canning foods requires several cooking processes in a factory, plus the cost of the tin or glass containers. Freezing and distributing frozen food is extremely expensive.

Farmer Not To Blame

The high cost of milk is another example cited by Senator Gillette. More and more housewives are demanding that it be delivered to the door. If they bought it at the grocery store it would be as much as two cents a quart cheaper, he reveals. That's about a 10 percent saving. A Chicago attorney wrote Gillette saying that some milk routemen were making \$10,000 a year.

The housewife pays for this salary, as well as all of the other food services which she is now requiring.

The long-time statistics of the Department of Agriculture prove that the increased demand for processed food is a very recent trend. For the last 20 years the farmer and the food middlemen—the grocers, canners, packers, wholesalers and distributors—have been taking about a 50-50 cut of the retail food dollar with the farmer. Just recently, however, Gillette's committee has discovered that something radical is happening to this divvy. Farmer's prices are going down. But retail food prices are staying about the same, and in some cases, going up.

Just exactly how big a factor the housewife's laziness is in this phenomena is what Senator Gillette is determined to find out. The handsome, gracious senator is far too much of a gentleman to come right out and say that the American housewife is getting lazy. But he says that he wants her to be sure she knows exactly what her new freedom from the kitchen is costing.

Russian Troops Squeeze Yugoslavia, Assertion

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Oct. 21. — (AP) — Yugoslavia charges that Russian troops have moved into neighboring communist countries to build up "warmongering" pressure against Marshal Tito's regime.

The charges, printed in the official newspaper Borba, said Red army troops have moved into Romania. Fortifications are being built under Russian supervision along the Yugoslav borders in Bulgaria, Hungary and Albania, the paper declared.

In Athens, well-informed intelligence officers said privately that Russia has placed five divisions along the Yugoslav borders in the last month.

(These sources — American, British and Greek—said Russia apparently feared that Tito was secretly backing plans for a revolt in the isolated Soviet satellite of Albania.)

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(NEA Telephoto)
SARAH CHURCHILL WED—Sarah Churchill (above), actress daughter of Winston Churchill, and British society photographer Anthony Beauchamp were married at Sea Island, Ga., just 24 hours after they announced their engagement. The couple had planned a New York wedding at a later date.

Crack German Fencer Given Canadian Entry

OTTAWA, Oct. 21.—(CP)—Immigration officials said Thursday a request from Henry Huttenbach, 18-year-old German national, for temporary admission to Canada has been approved.

Huttenbach, classified as an enemy alien, had appealed to the Canadian immigration officials for special clearance papers to compete in an international fencing tournament Friday at Vancouver.

He is Gonzaga university's No. 1 fencer and was born in Germany. Because there is no formal peace treaty with Germany he is not permitted to enter Canada. He fled Germany with his parents during the war and has applied for U. S. citizenship.

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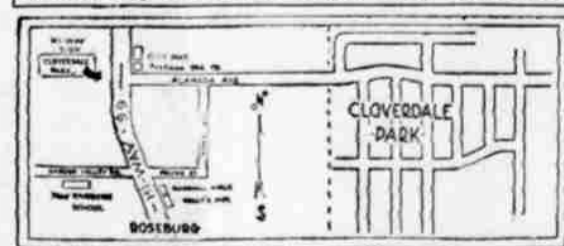
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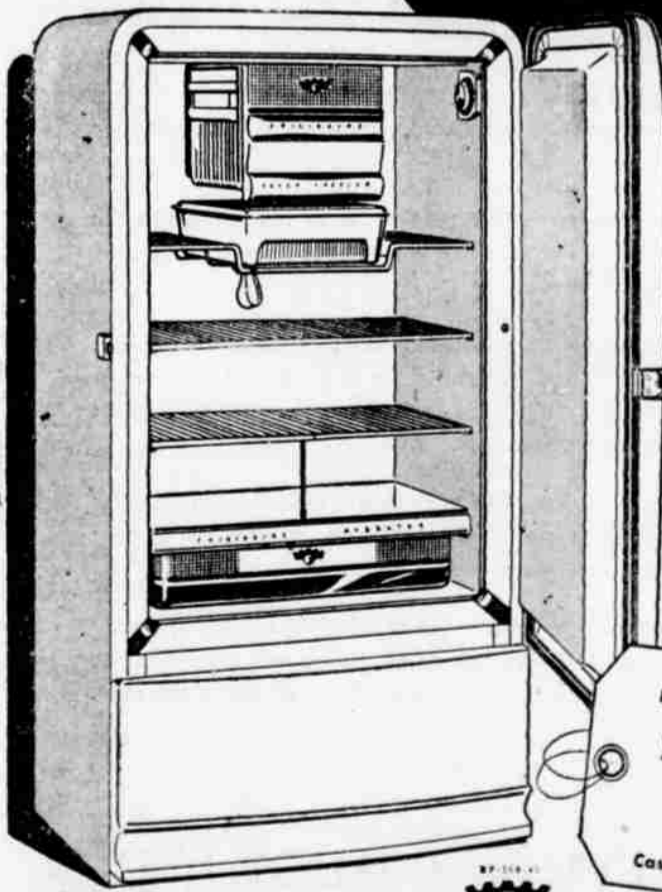
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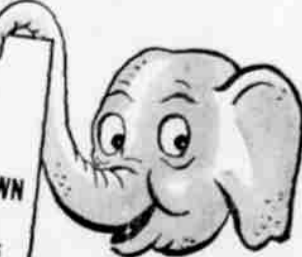
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