

BROOKINGS-HARBOR PILOT

Entered as second-class matter, at the postoffice at Brookings, Ore., March 7, 1946, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

DEWEY AKERS, Editor and Publisher

Member
OREGON NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL EDITORIAL
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1948
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Per Year, in Curry County, Oregon.....\$2.50
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By Harris Elsworth

For nearly two years, government buying of wheat, coarse grains, fats and oils, and other food commodities has forced steep advances in the prices of food. As food prices advanced, it became necessary to pay higher wages in most industries so the general price levels advanced. Since July 1, 1946, when the heavy government purchasing began, prices have advanced so alarmingly that the condition appeared to be one of inflation.

Last fall, the President called Congress into session, and demanded of the Republican Congress that we do something to bring down high prices. Surely Mr. Truman must have enjoyed a cynical chuckle as he prepared his message in which he demanded that the Congress give him blanket power to institute a new OPA. He knew, of course, he was safe in making the request as the Congress would do no such thing. At the same time, however it was a perfectly lovely political hammer with which to beat the republicans over the head.

But what looked like a beautiful election year scheme recently began to fall apart. Wheat and other basic food prices dropped, and in spite of an announcement by Secretary of Agriculture Anderson that the government was about to buy another 50 million bushels of grain, the decline in price continued.

As nearly as I can put the events together in their proper order, here is about what happened the week before the market broke. On Tuesday and Wednesday of that week, one or more large speculators placed orders with their brokers to sell a total of more than a million bushels of grain. Commodity prices began to sag, and on Thursday, when the Secretary of Agriculture ordered the government buying of wheat stopped, the bottom fell out of the market. On Sunday at the end of the week, February 8, the "Washington Star" said in a front page news story: "Secretary of Agriculture Anderson disclosed last night that information on government grain procurement and allocation plans reached grain markets in advance of his public statement Thursday. The grain trade, Mr. Anderson said, then was faced with a realization that we were about through with heavy purchases. Reports of what we were going to announce got out," he told a reporter.

The simple fact is that when

the government was buying under President Truman's orders as carried out by Secretary Anderson, prices advanced sharply. That advance in prices has been going on for many months. When the government stopped buying prices of commodities went down. The buying programs could have been handled in a way to have avoided sharp market increases, but down through the months, government buying has been in heavy quantities, and sharp price increases have generally followed each government buying order closely.

In view of recent events, it seems as if the cost of living price spiral upward, which the President called us into session to control, was not only substantially caused by his own buying procedure, but could have been checked by him. I say it could have been, because the market tumbled quickly and sharply the instant it became known that government buying was to be curtailed.

Republican Lincoln-Day speakers for years have had a monopoly on the subject of criticizing the New Deal Democratic administration. This year the left-hand Wallace crowd has stolen some of our critical thunder and now the right-hand southern democratic segment of the administration party has entered the contest, leaving republican criticism of the administration running almost a poor third from a standpoint of vehemence and of volume.

Continued from last week

Being amazed by this figure, I requested a breakdown of the various items contained in this estimate. The most that the veterans administration could itemize was \$1,285,000, or substantially less than first stated.

Surprising as this reduction in estimated cost may have been, I was amazed to discover that this estimate covered provisions for a combination 500 bed domiciliary facility and a 500 bed general medical hospital, although the bills dealt solely with domiciliary use. On studying the figures, I became convinced that the estimate had been padded by 300 per cent by the inclusion of items and facilities not contemplated in the bill. Some of these latter items were \$218,000 for a laundry building, equipment and installation (Camp White had laundry facilities for 40,000 servicemen); \$443,000 for hospital beds and hospital equipment; \$100,000 for incinerator and ground improvements; \$145,000 for contingencies; \$167,000 for overhead and profit.

I have recently been advised that the equipment which has been removed from Camp White is in storage and still available in surplus without cost. I have also learned that the items listed for actual use as a domiciliary

facility are in excess of actual requirements.

During the past few years, while all of these efforts have been made to bring about the use of this hospital, veterans in the Pacific northwest have suffered from lack of care. More than 200 cases have been approved for hospitalization but are unable to be assigned at this time because of lack of space. The nearest domiciliary facilities for the northwest are at Los Angeles and Hot Springs, North Dakota. I believe the above information illustrates adequately how arbitrary bureaus of the government can sometimes become. I am endeavoring to secure a hearing on my bill before the House committee, and I believe that, when the House and Senate committees complete their studies of this matter, the genuine facts of will be known, and the decision can be made on the merit rather than on prejudice, fictitious objections, and cost estimates.

Some member of Congress, and I have not yet learned who, in all seriousness wrote a statement for a newspaper in his district referring to the Marshall Plan as the "Bi-Partisan European Recovery Program". The newspaper headline writer condensed it to BERP!

Banquet Delights Co. Champions

Turkey, with all the trimmings up to three servings to many, delighted the county champion basketball team, Sunday evening, when a banquet was served in its honor at the Chetco Cafe, by Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Freeman.

The menu, consisting of crab cocktail, turkey and dressing, with all other delicacies tempting to the youthful appetites, was prepared and served by the Chetco Cafe, with Mrs. Betty Nelson and Mrs. June Hart serving.

Aiding in the menu preparation was Mrs. Wilson Freeman who baked the banana cream pie, and Mrs. W. A. Foltz who baked the hot rolls.

With Lynn Hampton, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Guthrie and Mr. and Mrs. Freeman, 32 were seated at the horseshoe counter and booths. Don Church, as student body president, thanked Mr. and Mrs. Freeman for the honor bestowed upon the team.

Cub Scout Doings

Next Monday, February 23rd, the Cub Scouts will hold their monthly pack meeting. This pack meeting will have something in the line of unusual as each Den has worked out its own program and has made its own decorations in the blue and gold theme.

The program should prove very interesting as each Den will be competing against the others.

We are looking forward to a very interesting evening. Refreshments will be served.

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Mrs. Dora Bealieu, upon receiving word of the birth of a five-pound, six ounce daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Jack Miller at Redmond, couldn't wait to care for details at home before taking off for central Oregon.

"Her name is Susan Kay, you can't keep this grand away" she told the Pilot before embarking for Redmond, stay is indefinite.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Miller here last fall for their present home at Redmond.

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- Fir Dimension and Shiplap
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