WASHINGTON WEEK

By Harris Ellsworth, M. C.

The law which gave President Truman authority to control prices and wages was passed by Congress Sept. 8, 1950—nearly 5 months ago. Members of Congress thought when they voted for the bill that controls would be quickly put on. Prices had been slowly rising since the outbreak of the fighting in Korea. It was known that when military expansion programs were announced prices would go still higher unless frozen. Military expansion always means the withdrawal of vast amounts of materials from the normal civilian economy. This causes scarce supply of many items and, under such circumstances in our free economy which operates under the law of supply and demand, prices go up. The sudden unbalancing of our economy because of the necessity for military buying is the only justifiable reason for resorting to price and wage controls.

But since Sept. 8, when price controls were authorized by Congress, two things have been happening: (1) Producers and owners of merchandise have been quietly marking up their prices simply because they figured such mark-ups would be rolled back anyway and they might as well make as much money as possible before the blow fell. (2) Military supplies and equipment, both for the action in Korea and for defense including the European arms program, have been draining the supply of material of various kinds.

Both of these activities have caused prices to rise much faster and much higher than they would have gone if the price control law had not been passed and allowed to lie dorman—as a threat rather than a protection. Recently I saw a competent estimate that the people of our country have paid some 16 billions of dollars more for their cost of living since the Korean war started than they would have paid in the same period of time before June 25. It might be reasonably claimed therefore that the political and dilatory tactics of the Administration have cost us 16 billion dollars on top of our already staggering tax load.

When the price order finally did come it left the price-increasers—the chiselers—with a profit they never expected. It left prices artificially high for the people to pay. Small wonder then that my mail every day indicates that people have lost faith in our present administration. What I have said here, I think, indicate that Congress did its part early by passing the necessary law. But it must be remembered that under our constitutional system, Congress only makes the laws. The executive branch administers them. Our troubles now are simply the result of outrageously bad administration.

* * *

It has been flatly charged that the Economic Stabilization Agency, which will administer price and wage controls, is being built into a nation-wide Democrat machine with the Democrat national committee actually in charge of the build-up and passing on all job candidates who receive $4000 a year or more.

The Washington News says that the Democrat National Committee is asking Democrat governors senators, state chairmen and local bosses for names and then sending them to Price Administrator Michael V. DiSalle. The News also said: "No Dixiecrats accepted and no one who opposed President Truman's renomination or otherwise offended top Democrats." The New York Herald-Tribune made an investigation of the announced policy of the ESA that politics would be kept at a "minimum" in filling agency jobs and learned that "minimum" applies to Republicans. The newspaper sent telegrams to the 37 top men already appointed in 13 regions to learn their political affiliations. Of the first 12 answers received, 10 of the price control officials said they were Democrats. One would not say what party he belonged to and the other said he was unaffiliate.

The top price control jobs pay $12,000 or $13,000 a year.

* * *

Strange things are often done by our big government in the name of economy — everything that is, except the practicing of actual down to earth economy. Less than a couple of years ago the Secretary of Defense cancelled the construction of a giant airplane carrier, after several millions had been spent on plans and on actual construction. Recently the big carrier was again authorized but a smaller carrier will now cost $60 millions more money than the first one would have cost.

The post office department could be operated more efficiently and economically. It could reorganize as recommended by the Hoover commission and save millions. But it didn't do that. No, the Postmaster General has now tightened our belts (figuratively speaking) and taught us to bear the hard rigors of postal economy. He discontinued directory service in all post offices of city delivery size. Now when I mail a letter to you and do not have a correct address or box number on it, the post office saves the supposedly terrible cost burden of having someone in the local office flip a directory and put the address on the envelope. Instead of doing that simple and inexpensive job it carts that letter all the way back across the nation to Washington, D. C. and to my office.

That is the way it is now. I receive numerous letters each week to which I would like to reply but cannot—simply because writers merely write the name of their town at the top of the letter. We look in the local telephone directories which we have at hand, but when such a correspondent's name and address is not listed there, I am unable to address a reply to him. So, please when you write to me include in your letter your complete adress.

* * *

The house recently re-established the select committee on small business which continue its its operations during the 82nd congress. This "small business committee has done a good job being a watch dog over the interests of the little business man and his dealings with government. There has been a marked tendency on the part of procurement officials to do their buying the easy way—by purchasing of big nation-wide concerns and ignoring the small supplier.

In its weekly bulletin the committee takes note of this situation with the following comment: "Purchases through formal advertising are diminishing at an alarming rate. Careful estimates indicate that negotiated purchases by the army have risen to the astounding figure of 92% of total dollar value. Instead of 'broadening the industrial base of the procurement program' as suggested by the Dec. 18 directive of the secretary of defense the base has sharply narrowed. Why? Because small business is being left out of the negotiations. Further, costs for standard common-use items are rocketing. Examples of what appear to be unnecessary negotiations over the past few weeks are such items as leather purses, writing paper, carbon paper, goggles, canvas slippers and many others. Supplies and equipment in the critical and security categories should be negotiated."

* * *

The "one package" appropriation bill has been abondoned. In the last session appropriations for all departments and agencies were lumped into one huge bill (more than 400 pages). I opposed that idea at the time as being inefficient and confusing. I further believed that such a system provided too much opportunity for slipping in items which might be buried in the mass of pages of the big bill but would stand out more clearly otherwise.

Apparently an overwhelming number of the members of the appropriations committee believed the same way. This year, therefore, we return to the former system. The appropriation bills will be handled more rapidly. (The big bill was nearly three months late in passage last year with the result that the agencies of the government went through one-fourth of their fiscal year without knowing for certain what their appropriations were). Each department and agency will have full consideration on the floor of the house. As several bills came out one at a time, all members will have plenty of time to study them. Under the other system, we had to wait until almost the end of the session before seeing any proposed appropriation items and then had to study them all in a short period of time.

LOCAL NEWS

Mrs. Lynn Hampton, teacher in the local school, is ill at her home with flu, one being affected by an epidemic making its rounds in the vicinity.

Elton Schroeder, the furniture dealer and mortician of Myrtle Point, stopped in Brookings while en route home from the Furniture Mart, San Francisco, to call on business men here. He told the Pilot he expected to establish a funeral parlor here early this spring, on the lot near the high school which he has owned for several years.

Mrs. Charles Young, of Young's 5 & 10, has gone to Camas, Wash., to become acquainted with her new granddaughter. Joyce, her adughter, is wife of Harold Dodds who formerly worked at the Haggerty Twinservice.

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Young of Gold Beach were visitors in this area last Saturday when Mr. Young, vice-president of Curry County Bank, conferred with Mr. Fischer, architect of the Seventh-Day Adventist church about plans for the Brookings branch of Curry County Bank, to locate here soon.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Crook are having extensive remodeling done on their kitchen at present.

Elder and Mrs. Leo VanDolson were honored guests, Sunday eve when about 20 friends gathered at the Howard Adams home for dinner.

The Freshman class gave a return party to the student body of the local high school at the gym Saturday night.

The Women's Missionary Society of the Community church meets this afternoon (Thursday) at 1:30 at the home of Mrs. Emil Moore for dessert luncheon and a business meeting.

Mrs. Nettie Harris of San Martin, Calif., is a guest at the home of Mrs. Florence Forgie.

Tom Newton, former resident, who was visiting his brothers and sisters in the Harbor area, was called to Oberlin, Kans., by the death of Mrs. Newton's mother last week. Mrs. Newton had gone east previously to care for her mother.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Hibbard, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Sandbo, shopped at Eureka last Friday and Saturday.

Weather Report

For the week ending on Sunday:

	Max.	Min.	Rain
Feb. 5	53	50	.29
Feb. 6	57	50	.02
Feb. 7	54	52	1.39
Feb. 8	66	48	....
Feb. 9	62	55	.01
Feb. 10	56	52	1.10
Feb. 11	53	50	.67
Rainfall for week			3.42