

"IT CAN'T BE DONE." CRY ALL CLOTHIERS

Retail Price of \$24.50 for Suit Held Too Low.

WHOLESALE COSTS ARE UP

Verdict of Fair Price Committee at Chicago Is Held Absurd by Dealers in Portland.

"Absurd!" "Preposterous!" "Impossible!" "It can't be done!" These and similar exclamations of equal emphasis were voiced yesterday by Portland clothiers after digesting a news dispatch from Chicago to the effect that the Chicago "fair price" committee had set \$24.50 as the fair price for men's suits and overcoats.

While but a few isolated exceptions there is not a clothing store in Portland selling men's suits and overcoats as low as \$24.50, while those stores which have priced these articles at this figure frankly admit it is only on old stock where there are but a few suits left.

"It is absurd to say that \$24.50 is to be set as a fair price for suits or overcoats," said Ben Selling. "It simply cannot be done. For example, we have but recently purchased a supply of suits and light overcoats for early spring delivery and the very cheapest wholesale price we were able to get was \$20. Many of these suits we purchased for as high as \$60 wholesale. Of course it would be possible for us to sell these suits for \$24.50, but we most assuredly would not remain in business. Even a philanthropist couldn't remain solvent for any length of time if he attempted to sell merchandise from 25 to 100 per cent less than its cost wholesale."

Average Cost \$45 Wholesale.

C. G. Mathis, clothier, was even more emphatic in his protest of the Chicago "fair price" prices than were the other clothiers. Having returned less than two weeks ago from eastern jobbing and manufacturing centers, he said he personally knew that men's suits and overcoats cannot even be manufactured at the prices named as a reasonable retail price by the Chicago commission. "While in the east, I purchased more than 2000 suits for early spring delivery and the average cost was more than \$45 wholesale," he said. "But to say that men's serviceable suits can be purchased for \$24.50 is a libel against clothing manufacturers and an insult to men the country over."

Samuel Rosenblatt is another clothier who adds his protest against the findings of the Chicago commission. For, upon a recent trip to New York and Chicago, he found that clothing prices are not only advancing but the manufacturers unable to supply the unprecedented demand.

Basement Bargains Held Junk.

"It is true that in some of the basement departments of the larger eastern department stores you can find men's clothing selling as low as \$24.50 or even lower," he said. "But it is most assuredly not the sort of apparel that could be called serviceable. Those stores which are selling suits at that price are selling junk, the kind of stuff that is sold to Russians and other immigrants who still wear shawls over their heads."

It is true that the prices as named by the Chicago fair-price committee can be met in Portland and elsewhere, but it would give the consumer a very inferior quality of goods, said W. F. Olds, of Olds, Wortman & King. "If we attempted to sell goods of that inferior grade in our store we would soon lose our patronage."

Julius L. Meier, of the Meier & Frank Department store, refused even to discuss the Chicago news dispatch, dismissing the prices listed as an "absurdity" and all out of reason.

Other Stores Pay Much.

Investigation yesterday showed that except for men's suits and overcoats and women's shoes, the fair price list of the Chicago committee can be met in Portland. Shoe stores agree that women's shoes can be purchased for as low as \$4.95, the Chicago "fair price" quotation, but they are silent as to the quality. Likewise, in the department stores can be found women's hosiery, for 25 cents, and even less, women's suits for \$25 and less, women's underwear for \$1.25 and less, men's underwear for \$1.25 and less, women's coats for \$18.99 and less and boys' suits for \$5.99 and less.

In every instance, goods are offered at regular prices rather than at special sales.

But so far as men's suits are concerned, the Portland clothiers peruse the Chicago dispatch and throw up their hands in despair. For, so far as selling a suit at \$24.50 retail, they are all agreed that there "ain't no such animal."

VINEGAR MAN CONVICTED

St. Helens Cannery Manager Is Charged With Violating Dry Law.

ST. HELENS, Or., Dec. 13.—(Special)—Circuit court closed a two-weeks' session today. The principal case tried this week was that of the state versus L. Rosasco charged with the unlawful possession of intoxicating liquors. Rosasco, who is manager of the St. Helens Cannery company,

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CARL SWORD, Manager

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RATE HEARINGS ARE SET Oregon Public Service Commission to Consider Applications.

CARS OF APPLES FROZEN Freeze Causes Serious Losses in Hood River District. HOOD RIVER, Or., Dec. 13.—(Special)—The unprecedented cold weather here has undoubtedly caused a further loss from frozen apples.

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