

HIGH AS THE SKY

Black Pepper Raises From 3 Cents to \$142 a Pound

By RADER WINGET

New York, Dec. 5 (AP)—The wholesale prices on most foods are more than double prewar, but black pepper has gone up 47 times.

The retail price has jumped too, but less spectacularly. The housewife at her grocery now pays about 60 cents for the pre-war dime can of black pepper the common kind you use at home.

In 1939 the lowest price for black pepper was three cents a pound wholesale. It hit an all-time peak of \$1.42 a pound early last August, and it isn't very far from that now.

The situation is potentially explosive, pepper men say. It's something like a man screwing up his face to sneeze. He wrinkles his nose, takes a deep breath—and everybody waits.

Back in 1939, we imported some 30,000 tons of pepper, mostly from India and Indonesia. Pepper that year averaged four cents a pound. The war upset all that. Imports were erratic. In 1943 we imported only eight tons. The next year not even a shaker full ran the blockade to get in.

Such shortages boosted the price until OPA put a ceiling of ten cents a pound on black pepper. That lasted until early 1946 when the lid was lifted. Pepper jumped from an average of ten cents in 1945 to an annual average of 39 cents, to 43 cents, and to an average of 62 cents last year. This year it has moved steadily upward to its current high plateau.

The end of the war and higher prices didn't increase the pepper supply. In prewar days Indonesia produced 90 per cent of the world's pepper. But the Japanese wrecked the pepper gardens during their occupation. After they were thrown out, the Indonesians started rebuilding their industry. That's slow work. It takes about seven years for a domestic pepper plant to mature. And the work was delayed or halted from time to time by civil strife.

As a result, India took pepper leadership and turned out 80 per cent of world production.

Adding to the uncertainty was the American government's decision that pepper is a strategic war material in critical supply. It was marked for stockpiling. Such operations are top secret, but government buying always is a potential market factor to keep the price from sagging.

The big uncertainty is Indonesia, once the world's biggest producer. Some of New York's most important pepper traders have their agents in Indonesian ports where they gather all the information they can on pepper for their companies.

But they don't know, they say, what the situation is in the interior. Travel is difficult throughout the country and information is restricted. Some believe there may be large stocks of pepper there harvested from gardens that escaped notice. Others think there may be some stocks concentrated from harvests of wild pepper plants or from abandoned gardens.

If large stocks were uncovered, or if shipments from Indonesia should start suddenly, it would have a dramatic effect on the pepper situation.

Tract Purchased By McKillop Firm

Further development of the Liberty area is noted in plans by the McKillop Real Estate company of Salem, which has purchased a tract of 25 acres from Mrs. Matilda Oakman.

The tract is located between Browning avenue and Cunningham lane and will be subdivided into lots. Electric power is now available and efforts are being

made to bring water to the location.

The new subdivision will be known as Oakman Acres.

Assisting Hill in the direction were Marion Sparks as assistant

director, Rex Lindemoos as technical director, Chic Schmidt on lighting and Mary Louise Lee as makeup technician.

Displaying enthusiasm throughout the production, the audience was especially appreciative as the players appeared for several curtain calls.

Calumet Farm's Armed, leading money-winning gelding, will race at Hialeah this winter for the eighth straight season.



Youngest Iron Lung Polio Victim—Completely paralyzed at four months old, little Dianne Chabot lies in a respiratory at General hospital, the youngest polio victim to be placed in an iron lung in Los Angeles. The parents, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Chabot of Garvy, Calif., said the child was not hospitalized until two days after she was stricken because of an error in diagnosis. Her condition is critical. (Acme Telephoto)

Wilder Play Well Presented By Cast From Willamette

By EILEEN SCOTT ROSS

Stage Manager Frank Lockman looked over a near-capacity crowd at the Salem high school auditorium Saturday night as he appeared on stage for the prologue of "Our Town." The play, a Willamette university production, was under the capable direction of Prof. Ruane B. Hill who is a newcomer to the school this year.

With Lockman's deep voice setting the mood, the simplicity of the Thornton Wilder play was sustained by the actors throughout the three acts. Audience interest was noted in the unorthodox setting, which utilized a minimum of properties, and in the pantomime.

Lloyd Hanson played the adolescent role with both sincere feeling and humorous touches. Playing opposite was Audrey Bliss, who handled the part effectively. The older leads were taken by Dorothy Wood, Jim Lester, Barbara Langley and Dave Place.

Sam Pitner was well cast as the pedant, and Cleora Norwood exhibited a fine sense of timing in her comedy. The cast was a large one, and all the members were convincing as townspeople of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire.

Assisting Hill in the direction were Marion Sparks as assistant

Make GI Home Loans Attractive for Banks

Washington, Dec. 5 (AP)—

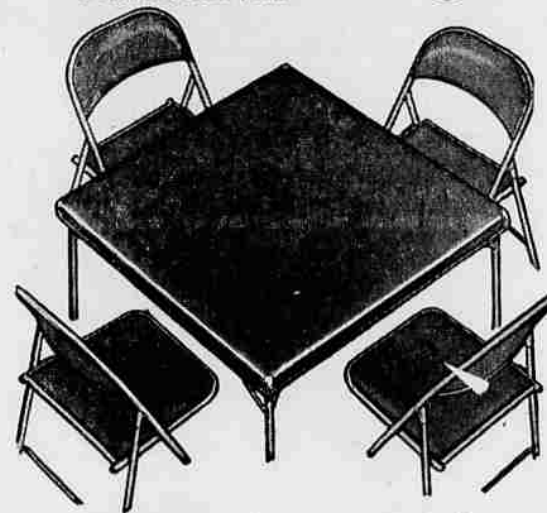
The Veterans Administration today announced the easing of regulations on GI loans to make them more attractive for banks. The principal changes include provisions that veterans

can now move into their houses even though the outside street work is not completed.

The other provision is that banks or lending agencies can now charge a flat fee of one per cent of the loan to cover such items of expense as preparing papers and mailing them, cost of appraisals, cost of inspection and other items of expense involved in originating a loan.

Calumet Farm's Armed, leading money-winning gelding, will race at Hialeah this winter for the eighth straight season.

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