

SCANNING THE WEEK'S NEWS

of Main Street and the World

OPS Orders New Beef Price Control Plan Calling for 10 Cent Rollback

BEF PRICE CONTROLS—In one sweeping order that will touch nearly every family in the home towns of America as well as 300,000 meat retailers and 25,000 packers, slaughtermen and other meat wholesalers, the OPS put into force a new beef price control program calling for almost a dime-a-pound roll-back at the butcher shop by October 1.

The order is expected to save the American housewife \$700 million in the butcher shops. Housewives cannot expect retail prices of beef to drop immediately, however, because the program provides for progressively reducing ceiling over a period of time that will allow livestock producers to unload their high cost animals.

Livestock men have balked at controls over cattle prices and warned they would result in less meat production. Michael V. DiSalle, OPS director, will likely be severely criticized by the industry.

These are the steps in the new beef program:

1. A 10 per cent cut in prices which slaughterers may pay the farmer for cattle. This goes into effect for accounting periods beginning on or after May 20.

2. Dollar and cents ceilings are fixed for wholesaler and retailers for the first time. The wholesaler ceilings go into effect May 9, the retail ceilings on May 14. Butcher shops must post retail ceiling price charts, by grade and cut, by June 4.

3. Prices slaughterers may pay for cattle are to be reduced an additional four and one-half per cent on August 1 and by same amount on October 1.

4. On the same August 1 and October 1 dates, retail beef prices cut from four to five cents a pound will go into effect.

MORE CONTROLS—Main Street may feel a greater degree of the control pinch if President Truman's proposed legislation gets through congress. He has called for re-enactment, with some stiffening, of virtually everything in the defense production act of 1950. In view of Mr. Truman's recent troubles, it is doubtful if his suggestions will be accepted without considerable criticism.

He proposed:

1. Fixing the parity price for each farm commodity as of the beginning of its marketing season for price control to cover the entire season.

2. Establishing effective rent controls for both residential and commercial properties "wherever needed to stabilize the cost of living and the cost of doing business."

3. Strengthening machinery for the enforcement of price control regulations.

4. Authorizing the government "to build and operate defense plants, to produce essential materials and equipment."

5. Providing for controls over credit in the sale of existing housing.

6. Regulating speculative trading on commodity exchanges.

THINGS TO COME—If the man on Main Street thinks the Truman-MacArthur controversy is going to die, he is badly mistaken. The battle is just about to begin.

This was indicated in a long and extemporaneous speech by Sen. Robert Taft in which he attacked the U. S. joint chiefs of staff and demanded that the U. S. go "all-out" in Korea.

The senator said that he was willing to follow the MacArthur proposals for bombing military objectives in Communist China and for giving logistical support, meaning transport and cover, to Nationalist attack on China proper.

The senator's speech made it clear that the Republican plan to use the forthcoming investigations of the MacArthur dismissal to force an overturning of present far east policy.

A WARNING TO AMERICA—Robert A. Vogeler, shaky, pale and nervous was released from a Hungarian prison after 17 months imprisonment. He had a message for the Main Street of America.

"I want to warn every individual American that what happened to me can happen to them if we don't band together to destroy these enemies of individual freedom," he told newsmen after his release.

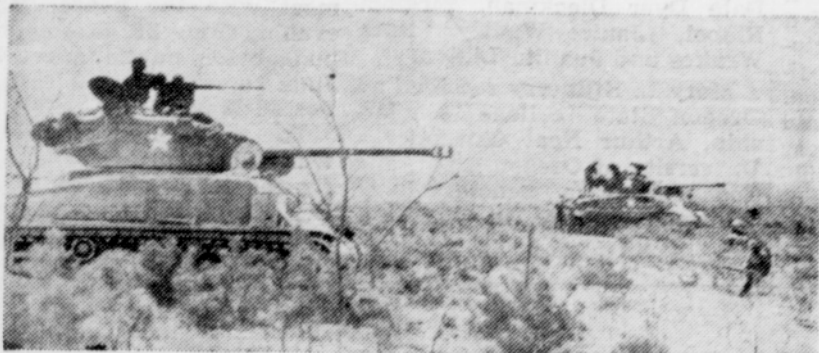
"I have a message for America—an important one.

"America must be made aware of what can happen to human rights—right of a person to go where he wants and say what he wants . . . or the right to be able to go to bed and not be afraid of being taken away from his family to prison in the middle of the night."

RETURN OF LABOR—With the return of organized labor to all defense mobilization agencies, the man on Main Street can expect the unions to exert a greater influence over the administration's future defense proposals.

It was evident by labor's return to the defense agencies that the administration had surrendered on many points of conflict and is now willing to listen to the united labor policy committee.

Union leaders made known immediately their first campaign. As one expressed it, "We will now turn the heat on congress by undertaking a new campaign for tighter price-control laws and other legislation to insure equality of sacrifice in the defense effort."



Chinese Attack South of Parallel

A U.S. tank battalion lingers into a defensive position north of Seoul, prepared to take a heavy toll of advancing Chinese Communist forces.

SPRING IN KOREA—It is spring in Korea. But there is no peace and tranquility in the warm sun. The song birds can not be heard for the constant roar of artillery. The tender sprigs of grass and shrubs are trampled beneath the boots of invading Chinese and defending United Nations troops. It is time for war in Korea.

But the great Communist spring offensive is not doing so well. And the people in the home towns of America who are thinking of their sons and brothers and husbands have gained confidence from reports of allied victories.

The Reds approached Seoul, but came to a dead stop after allied naval, air and artillery bombardments. On other fronts the fighting had died down for the time being.

But as long as it is spring in Korea, the Communists will attack. This time, however, they are running into a meat grinder of fire power.

A SLIGHT DECLINE

Food Prices Down .3 of a Per Cent

The bureau of labor statistics reported that a survey of eight cities revealed that retail food prices declined slightly during the latter part of March.

It was the second time since the wage-price freeze of January 25 that there was a falling off in the retail food-price index kept by the bureau. The decline, however, was only .3 of a per cent.

At the first of April the index was about 11 per cent above that of last June, before the Korean fighting began, and 14 per cent above a year ago.

The decline was due largely to a small drop in prices of fresh fruit and vegetables. Cabbage led the decline with a 19 per cent drop. Carrots were down 18 per cent and fresh tomatoes down 11.

Rural Churches

Members Go to Small Towns

LEXINGTON, Ky.—Persons in Kentucky's farming areas are becoming less able to support rural churches and schools because of a population decrease, a rural sociologist believes.

Dr. James Brown, a University of Kentucky professor said many Kentuckians "are going to town." He offered proof that three-fourths or more of the incorporated towns of 1,000 or more had gained in population in the last ten years.

Speaking to the 14th annual Rural Leadership Institute, the professor said that the shift would bring a resultant rise in the standard of living, a growing healthy trade dependence and a satisfying "sense of belonging" due to an increasing sharing of schools, churches, organizations and businesses by town and country people.

Dr. Brown said that migration rather than a lowered birth rate was accountable for the low rate of gain in Kentucky's overall population.

Small Town Banker Gives His Community Its Electric System

PRYOR, Okla.—Banker W. A. Graham, nearing the age of 100, is a wealthy, prominent, and unusual citizen of this eastern Oklahoma resort town of 4,400 persons.

Graham, an unusually active man for 99 years, has a personal fortune valued at several million dollars. Any Pryor citizen will tell you, however, that he has a heart as big—or bigger—than his credit rating.

Sometime ago Graham suggested that the town acquire its own electric system from a private utility and backed up the recommendation with a \$100,000 cash donation.

In explaining his philanthropy to Mayor Earl Ward, he said only, "I had some money I didn't have any use for." Later, however, he gave a more elaborate, and perhaps, more humane explanation. "I've made my money here. The people have been my customers. I want to give them back some of it."

Pryor voters came through by approving \$180,000 in bonds to match Graham's donation. When several nuisance suits threatened to block the project, the banker bought up the entire stock issue and then gave it back to the town gratis, and the deal went through.

Although no churchgoer, Graham has made numerous donations to local churches. He consistently supports the public library, and has been known to make payment on assessment against homes of widows unable to meet mortgage payments.

But, he is still not a "soft touch." He doesn't lend money to those he feels will not be able to repay.

Graham's rise in the business field is a prime example of what a small town businessman can accomplish with the proper know-how. He was a country school teacher in his home state of Georgia before he went to work for a flour mill at \$25 a week. Nine years later he owned a third interest in the concern.

His first business in Pryor was in a general store partnership with a Cherokee Indian. He became a banker after statehood.

An employee once asked Graham how he managed to amass his fortune.

"Young man," he replied, "Do you know how fast money multiplies at 6 per cent?"

Village Couple Have 21 Children; Happy Family

SOLDIERS GROVE, Wis.—One of the largest families in the nation lives on a farm on the edge of the small town of Soldiers Grove (population 700).

The family recently gained national prominence with the birth of the 21st child—a boy—to Mrs. Fred Schoville.

The 40 year old Soldiers Grove woman declared at a family reunion last year that her son, Charles, then 6 months old, would "be the last—but I've been wrong so often."

Mrs. Schoville has had 12 girls and nine boys in her 26 years of married life. Of her 20 living children, the oldest is 25. One boy died in infancy.

Schoville, 44, rents a 280 acre farm and earns extra money selling oil burners, oil and calendars.

"We've been a happy family," Mrs. Schoville told reporters. "It's because we trust in the Lord, and the oldest children have always been willing to take care of the younger ones."

Farm Women Entertain Town Ladies With Dinner

EXIRA, Iowa—Audubon county's first dinner sponsored by farm women with town women as their guests was held recently in the Memorial hall at Audubon.

The results of such dinners in other counties in Iowa prompted the action of Audubon county farm women.

Members of the farm women's organization that sponsored the event reported such dinners have brought about a closer working relationship between farm women and town women with a clearer understanding of each others problems and viewpoints.



Wake Island Report

A HIGHLIGHT of the current Truman-MacArthur controversy is the New York Times story summarizing the conversations between the two men at Wake Island.

Because the New York Times story had the earmarks of being leaked out by the White House, some MacArthur proponents have challenged it, while MacArthur states that no records were made of the conversations on Wake Island.

In view of this controversy, the Washington Merry-Go-Round's account of the Wake Island conference, published on Jan. 23, some months prior to the Times' April 21 account, may be significant. For the President can hardly be accused of any partiality toward this writer except in his choice of cuss words.

Writing at that time—three months before the Truman-MacArthur controversy—I reported that:

1. MacArthur was so sure of victory he promised General Bradley that he would transfer one full division to Europe.

2. MacArthur assured the President the Chinese would not intervene.

3. MacArthur expected to get his troops back to the United States by Christmas.

4. Because of the certainty of victory, much of the conference was devoted to plans for reconstructing Korea.

5. Highlight of the Wake Island meeting was the brilliant conversation of one man.

MacArthur completely dominated the conversation.

What They Said

Because the Wake Island conference now appears to be playing such an important part in the Truman-MacArthur controversy, the salient portions of my Jan. 23 Wake Island column follow:

The President of the United States flew halfway around the world to confer with General MacArthur, yet aside from a few conversational pleasantries, nothing has been published regarding what happened.

The direct talks between MacArthur and President Truman took place with no one else present; no stenographic notes were taken. It is next to impossible, therefore, to report accurately what happened. Furthermore, the stenographic notes made of the more extended conversation between Truman, MacArthur, General Bradley, and the other military men are still so secret that each copy is numbered.

Home by Christmas

MacArthur assured Truman that he could "finish the job in North Korea" in a short time. According to the stenographic notes he said: "I hope to be able to have the 8th army back in Japan by Christmas. I may be able to send a convoy into Pyongyang immediately." At this point, President Truman asked: "What about Chinese intervention?"

MacArthur's reply was: "They could have intervened earlier when it would have been decisive, but that time has passed. We are no longer fearful of their intervention. Although there are several hundred thousand along the Yalu river, it is not likely that they could cause us much trouble."

MacArthur's advice on the future of Korea was: "We should turn Korea over to the Koreans as quickly as we can and get out as quickly as we can."

Troops to Europe

At one point, Gen. Omar Bradley asked whether MacArthur could make any troops available for Europe in the next two months.

MacArthur replied: "Yes, I think a division can be made available early in 1951."

Bradley also remarked that he hoped MacArthur wouldn't have the same trouble he had with American pilots in Europe shooting up railroad bridges that were needed later for rehabilitation.

"I have the same trouble," MacArthur replied. The stenographic notes show laughter at this point.

Only other laughter came when John Muccio, U.S. ambassador to Korea, proposed using sound trucks for propaganda purposes to sell democracy to the Korean people.

MacArthur Merry-Go-Round

The Foreign Minister and Vice-President of Peru, who have been honored guests in this country, didn't mind being ousted from their Waldorf-Astoria hotel suite to make room for General MacArthur. But they did feel hurt at the lack of confidence implied by the fact that the locks on the doors were changed immediately after they departed. . . . MacArthur was able to recognize at least one Democrat among the Republicans—Sen. Tom Connally of Texas.



Three-Point Program

ABLE ERIC JOHNSTON, boss of the economic stabilization administration, has announced a three-point program which he says must be placed into effect to hold down the high cost of living and inflation in the mobilization emergency.

These three points include: (1) Holding industrial profits to 85 per cent of the best three out of the four years, 1946 to 1949; (2) fixing June 30 as last date on which labor can expect increases due to cost-of-living and escalator clauses in labor contracts and (3) freezing agricultural parity prices as of January 15, 1951.

This last point of the program is the one which is causing such a bitter battle in the congress, for it will require congressional action to freeze the parity price by amendment of the Agricultural Act of 1949.

Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan, already is up in arms against any such program for the farmers and flatly declares that farm prices have little or nothing to do with causes of inflation at the high cost of food prices.

And he proceeds to prove his point: (1) By showing that farm prices are on the down grade while farmers' expenses are going up; (2) you can buy more food and services today with an hour's labor than even in the lush year of 1929; (3) that farmers are being paid less for their labor, less for their investment and less for their management ability than other segments of the economy; (4) that only a third of cost index goes for food, and of this, 10 per cent is for such items as coffee, tea, fish and other items which have no relation to American farms or farmers, and (5) if all farm commodities rise below parity should immediately rise to the parity level it would have something less than a 5 per cent increase, which in turn would only mean about 1.5 per cent rise in the over-all consumer price index.

Brannan takes the 1950 farm income and reduces it to terms of wages and shows that the farmer today is getting only 69 cents an hour for his labor as compared to \$1.46 for manufacturing laborers; \$2.03 in the building industry and \$1.17 for retail trade workers.

Farm Income Lowest

He shows that the farmer is getting an allowance of 5 per cent on his investment as compared to 15 per cent for manufacturers in 1950 after taxes, and that while the farmers income is falling, the national income is on the up grade. For instance, he shows the net farm income in 1949 as \$14.1 billion as compared to a national income of \$216.8 billion; farm net income of \$13.0 in 1950 as compared to a national income of \$235.6 billion and the per capita farm and non-farm income as follows:

	Farm Income	Non-Farm Income
1947	\$922	\$1,363
1948	960	1,523
1949	816	1,494
1950	804	1,546

Purchasing Power

Scotching the oft-repeated demonstration that "a bill will buy so much less than it would two or three or 20 years ago," Mr. Brannan shows that an hour of factory labor will buy one-fourth more loaves of bread than it would in 1929, twice as many as in 1919 and two and a half times more than in 1914; that an hour's work will buy as much round steak as it did in 1949, only a sixth less than it did when steak was selling at bargain prices in 1939 and a fourth more than it did in 1929 or 1919.

Processing Costs More

And the secretary makes this point. In January of 1951 a typical market basket of food for a family of three was costing at the rate of \$709 per year. But of that \$709, marketing costs were taking \$352 and farmers were getting \$357.

The point being that we are getting better processing, better servicing and better packaging, all of which costs money. If we, Mr. Brannan said, had been satisfied with the same kinds and quantities of food we bought in 1935 to 1939 with 23 per cent of our disposable income, it would have cost us only 18 per cent of our 1950 disposable income.

Farm Bloc United

Mr. Eric Johnston will find a united farm bloc opposed to his premise of freezing parity prices as of January 15, or of any other date, in this congress. It may be, however, that just as the government is paying industry a subsidy in increased prices for all-out production of defense goods, the government may have to pay the farmer a subsidy for all-out production of the food, for farmers are engaged in war production just as is the industrialist.

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