

Remedy Sought for High Prices

Washington, July 31.—Governmental machinery was set in motion today in response to demands from the public that some official action be taken to relieve the high cost of living.

Prices as they affect the average consumer, assumed first place in interest in the capital. At the White House President Wilson was said to be giving "deep and very thoughtful consideration" to problems presented to him and the railroad administration by members of the railroad brotherhoods, who represented that prices would have to come down or wages go up, if social unrest was not to develop into upheaval. In the senate and house the situation gave rise to several resolutions to investigate the cause of existing price levels, another to reduce the volume of currency in circulation as a means of deflating prices, one to request the attorney general to stop speculation.

Late today Attorney General Palmer met eight high government officials whom he had summoned to his office for a discussion of high costs and the best methods to pursue to effect a reduction. After a talk lasting nearly three hours, the conference disbanded to meet again, probably next week, for further counsel based on additional information to be collected in the meantime. Those attending the conference included Secretaries Glass, Houston, Redfield and Wilson, Director General Hines, Chairman Murdock of the federal trade commission; Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Leffinwell and W. B. Colver of the federal trade commission.

Lee Speaks Out.

It developed today that demands for more wages were pending before the railroad administration from several hundred thousand employees, in foods on exchanges, and another to sell this year's wheat crop at market prices instead of at the government guarantee, the difference to be made up by the government.

Perhaps the frankest talk government officials have heard in a long time came in this connection, in the statement of W. G. Lee, president of the trainmen, before the wage adjustment board.

Mr. Lee told the board that an increase in wages was not the proper solution of the present economic hardships under which working men are laboring because they would be followed by new increases in the cost of everything which would more than absorb the additional pay. Until all classes get together to stop profiteering, he said, the only thing for every one to do is to get all the wages he can, a course, he declared, would result eventually in precipitating the "upheaval" now staring the country in the face.

Mr. Lee made public an abstract of the report of hearings recently held by the board of railroad wages on the trainmen's demands, at which he declared an upheaval "was nearer in

this country today than ever before, due to the unrest arising from mounting living costs. The railroads and government departments had better be assisting "to crush profiteering" by the "packers and other industries," he said, than "shouting across the table at each other" at hearings to consider still further increases.

"All of us are to blame," he said, "because we are exerting every effort to get more money for ourselves and better conditions. Every day we must realize that the profiteers are taking double from the working men what is given them; and the trouble with the people on the hill (Capitol) with us and with every corporation and with everybody, is that we are exerting ourselves to get the dollar, while the working man is merely existing and while the profiteering is piling up millions.

Going Wrong Way.

"I will admit to you gentlemen that we are going the wrong way. I admit to you that it is time to call a halt and I admit to you that until we get together, until we commence together to stop this, there will be hell in this country—and it is nearer today than I ever knew it in my years of experience. Just let somebody drop a match in this country of ours and it will be a sorry day for all of us.

"Unless my vision is most terribly obscured, then here is something coming to us pretty soon in this country that we had better take notice of. We had something of peace in this country prior to the war conditions. We were getting along fairly well until profiteering became so noticeable everywhere and until the commodities that working people are compelled to pay for were permitted to be increased, double and trebled, without any question and often seemingly with the approval of the government.

"We are nearer war in this world today, I believe, than when the Kaiser threw down the gauntlet. Our law makers are to blame, in my opinion, because the masses of the people would be behind them if they would attempt to correct it and surely there is power to correct it; but instead they are playing politics, as some of these labor organizations are playing politics, and it is the same all down the line."

Answering these questions, Mr. Lee said he did not believe in giving any one class advantages at the expense of another, but said as long as present methods continue he believes in everybody getting his share, as nearly as he can, "until the final upheaval comes, and in my opinion it is looking us in the face."

He declined to suggest how prices could be reduced, saying the country was paying millions of dollars to the men on the hill (capitol) who are supposed to have all the brains in the country and they are not acting to stop the increases.

"I am not a red card man, but I am coming close to it, if this thing keeps

up," Mr. Lee said.

Asked what would be his opinion as to wage rates based on present food prices, if the price level should decline materially, Mr. Lee said he did not feel justified in going into the question, but asked to be allowed to tell of his experiences in the recent strike at Winnipeg, where he said he found conservative home owners, members of his organization throwing away all they had gained in 25 years of membership and joining the general strike because they were told "to hell with all this; we can not stand it any more. Come with us and we will correct it."

Mr. Lee said they could not make contracts for the future, not knowing what tomorrow would bring forth. He declared he could not justify the fact that wheat is \$2.26 in this country and flour perhaps \$14 a barrel, when flour made from the same grade of grain sells in England for \$6.11.

"I want, if possible, to see some plan devised here that will permit somebody to say that beef, pork and commodities of that kind can not go above a certain per cent" Mr. Lee said.

Mr. Lee also expressed emphatic disapproval of "cost plus" war contracts by which he said owners of inferior factories had obtained fine plants and the First Presbyterians plants and big profits at the expense of the taxpayers. It was such things, he declared, that caused the railroad employees, faced by growing expenses, to be willing to follow a "red flag or anything that comes along."

As a step toward breaking the high prices, plans are being made by Secretary Baker, Postmaster General Burleson and Representative Kelly of Pennsylvania to sell through the parcel post surplus army food stocks valued at \$124,000,000.

Officials who attended the attorney general's conference declined to discuss what took place.

Mr. Palmer said the conference was called chiefly for the purpose of making a survey of the situation, developing any information on which the head of the nation's law enforcement machinery might apt to curb profiteering.

No Direct Law.

"It seems to be a universal pastime, putting this thing up to the attorney general," Mr. Palmer said smilingly. "Even the governors have taken to blaming this department for existing price levels."

In response to questions Mr. Palmer admitted that there was no law by which prices could be lowered directly but he declined to say whether new legislation was needed to enable the department to punish men who may be guilty of profiteering.

"There is a great deal of good law on the statute books," the attorney general declared.

When a course of action is decided upon, the federal trade commission is understood to be ready to supply the most extensive collection of industrial information ever gathered by any government. Production cost figures have been obtained by the commission on industries representing \$30,000,000,000 worth of capital as the result of its activities during the war in advising the government what prices to pay for the millions of dollars of purchases made by it. For this reason, it is believed the commission is ready to urge that further investigations which seem to be foreshadowed by resolutions pending in congress would only muddle the situation, causing the loss of valuable time and the waste of the money involved.

The commission's investigations during the war, all of which dealt only with the most authoritative information derived from the books of companies involved, are said to have shown that profiteering was at a minimum in the retail trades, most of the exorbitant profits which are being made are going to the manufacturers and wholesalers. As a remedy the commission generally is understood to favor a licensing system for corporations doing an interstate business, the system to be applied first in those cases where the mauling of the public has been most flagrant.

Talk in Senate.

In the senate hearing consideration of a resolution proposing reduction of the amount of currency in circulation, Senator Meyers, Democrat, Montana, said that high living costs were productive of Bolshevism and anarchism. Senator Poindexter, Republican, Washington, said the president had been given \$100,000,000 to feed distressed European peoples and added: "But it would be impossible to get an appropriation of \$1,000,000 for food for Americans."

One of the reasons urged for the appropriation to supply food to Europe, Senator Poindexter said, was maintenance of meat and food prices.

While the senate debate was in progress Representative Igoe, Democrat, Missouri, appealed informally to two house members to recommend adoption of his resolution for an in-

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quiry into the cost of living but no formal decision was reached.

One resolution proposes that the house ways and means committee conduct hearings during the recess to determine whether prices have been increased so as to offset federal taxation, and the other directs the federal trade commission to determine the cause and necessity of increased prices for shoes, sugar, coffee and clothing.

OVER THREE MILLIONS PAY ON THEIR INCOME

Three Per Cent of the Population Showed Total Net Income of \$13,652,383,207.

Washington, Aug. 4.—Income tax returns were filed by 3,472,890 persons, about 3 per cent of the population, for the calendar year 1917, according to final reports just completed by the bureau of internal revenue. They showed total net income of \$13,652,383,207. The increase over 1916, before the law was expanded to meet war expenses, was 3,035,854 returns and \$7,352,805,587 in net income, the former being so much greater comparatively, because the extension of the law took in small incomes previously exempt.

Taxes paid totalled \$675,249,450, an average of \$368.56 per individual, or 6.03 per cent of the income.

Returns were made on 1,640,758 incomes ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and ranged in the hundreds of thousands up to \$25,000. There were 30,391 returns on incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000; 12,439 returns

from \$50,000 to \$100,000; 3,302 from \$100,000 to \$150,000; 2,347 from \$150,000 to \$300,000; 559 from \$300,000 to \$500,000; 315 from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 and 141 over that figure.

A notable feature of the report was the showing that while there were 1,296 incomes over \$300,000 in 1916, the number was reduced to 1,015 in 1917. The million dollar incomes decreased from 206 to 141, and the decreases in the amount reported by persons in that class was \$157,427,730.

The million dollar men, however, paid more taxes than any other class, contributing \$109,424,999 to the government out of \$306,835,914 in income reported. Persons with incomes of \$2,000 to \$3,000 paid the smallest amount of taxes, \$9,097,378 on returns of \$2,461,137,000.

Residents of New York made more returns and reported more income than any other state, Pennsylvania and Illinois ranking second and third. Massachusetts ranked fourth in income reported, but Ohio came fourth in the number of taxable incomes.

As a reflection of the South's prosperity the nine southern states east of the Mississippi river reported an aggregate of almost \$860,000,000 for net incomes of more than \$1,000 for the year 1917. That was almost \$400,000,000 more than the aggregate reported for the year 1916, which, however, contained statistics of incomes of more than \$2,000, and was before the law was expanded to meet war expenses.

These southern states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia—reported

ed about six per cent of the country's total taxable incomes which was \$13,652,383,207. They turned in 237,831 of the country's 3,472,890 returns and their tax yield was \$24,355,100 of the country's total of \$675,249,450.

Georgia showed the largest number of personal returns for the South and the largest total net income, while Louisiana showed the largest tax yield. Virginia showed the largest number of incomes from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and the largest total net income of this class.

Statistics for 1917 for the nine southern states showing increases over 1916, follow:

Florida: Personal returns, 15,326; increase, 13,557; net incomes, \$45,319,996; increase, \$27,918,794; tax yield, \$1,525,131; increase, 1,202,495; \$1,000 to \$2,000 incomes, 6,039; net income, \$9,058,500.

Georgia: Personal returns, 38,252; increase, 34,808; net incomes, \$116,171,112; increase, \$83,178,147; tax yield, \$3,107,754; increase, \$2,729,692; \$1,000 to \$2,000 incomes, 14,403; net income, \$21,600.

North Carolina: Personal returns, 22,977; increase, 20,770; net incomes, \$69,649,131; increase, \$44,823,305; tax yield, \$2,651,504; increase, \$2,090,534; \$1,000 to \$2,000 incomes, 9,714; net income, \$15,571,000.

South Carolina: Personal returns, 22,321; increase, 21,117; net incomes, \$55,375,849; increase, \$45,492,902; tax yield, \$1,713,335; increase, \$1,636,137; \$1,000 to \$2,000 incomes, 10,361; net income, \$15,541,500.

Virginia: Personal returns, 37,951; increase, 33,761; net income, \$103,861,359; increase, \$61,644,895;

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Just look around and try and find some one who bought in several years ago who will sell for anything like the purchase price.

Lancaster County land is cheaper than any other County in the State. Why? It is because the people in this County have not realized the important duty that they owe their children, namely, to educate and leave them the prestige of a homestead.

Don't drag along like you have been doing, wake up and to thinking and figuring for yourself.

The above farm has at least \$1500 worth of buildings on it. Listen, I don't ask you \$6000 for it, or even \$5000; or \$4000; but the small sum of \$2866.50, which is cheap. The buildings are worth half the price I ask, leaving the land only cost \$1400 or \$15 an acre.

Don't sleep till you have seen me about this place. It can stay long.

You will have to pay for sleeping. This place has advanced \$300 since Mr. L. S. Starnes visited Greenwood County in search of a home.

W. E. PLYLER, The Land Man

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