

Retailers Hold Prices Up, Says Federal Board

Associations Keeping Members Advised of Another's Schedules Also Accused by Trade Commission

Stronger Laws Urged

Wider Distribution of Information Regarding the Market Conditions Asked

WASHINGTON, April 17.—Legislation to eliminate unnecessary brokerage transactions, to facilitate a wide distribution of information regarding market conditions and to strengthen the powers of the Federal government in its price investigations is recommended by the Federal Trade Commission in a report on the general industrial situation, drawn up at the request of President Harding and made public to-night at the White House.

"Open price associations," which operate within the law to keep their respective members advised confidentially of one another's price schedules, are accused by the commission of contributing to the maintenance of unduly high retail prices. It is suggested that means must be found to reduce costs of necessary commodities as fuel and housing, before other commodities can come back to normal.

"It should be said," the report concludes, "that following the disordered condition of the world's affairs, a shrinkage in values is inevitable, and that normal conditions will be the more quickly restored if the producer, the laborer, the manufacturer, the jobber and the retailer will each share at once in the unavoidable loss; and further, that any effort by any element to place its share of the common loss on the shoulders of others, and particularly on the consumer, can only result in a continuation of the conditions under which the country is now suffering."

Increased Production Necessary

Declaring that the cost of commodities to the consumer has not, but is being reduced in proper proportion to the decline in agricultural and other raw materials, the commission sets forth its belief that the country is not in a position to move toward the reduction of prices to the consumer is retarded chiefly at the retailing stage, and that relief at this point would be reflected back in increased production, which would reduce the production cost and relieve to some extent at least the check upon the manufacturer, and by increasing the demand for raw materials would react upon the producer.

The report also takes note of the influence of foreign combinations of capital in determining the price of such commodities as phosphate, tobacco and grain, and adds that among domestic combinations one of the newest and most widespread agencies for affecting markets is the "open price association." The report continues, "Normally, the purpose of these associations is to determine uniform cost accounting methods and to steady the market by furnishing the supply which it can readily absorb. The associations collect and publish for the benefit of their members figures of production, production costs, sales and sales prices and orders and stocks, in pursuance of a plan whereby the members of such associations are to compete among themselves and with others with knowledge of their own and their competitors' production costs and prices, the available supply and the demand."

Wider Distribution of Data

"The collection and public dissemination of such statistical data might make the operation of such associations to the benefit of the producer and the consumer alike, but unfortunately the tendency is here manifested to concentrate the information to members and to bring about uniform prices, and to level by curtailing production, or supply through action which tends strongly toward uniformity because based upon common information, but which purports to lack the element of concerted agreement characteristic of the combinations forbidden by the Sherman law."

"A substantial difficulty at the present time lies in the fact that there is no complete information available to any one with reference to the proper adjustment of manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers' prices in any industry. When it becomes possible for any fact-finding governmental body to determine at any stage the cost which a commodity represents at that stage, it can be determined whether an ex-

Senate Poet Is Far Up Stage; Mr. Common People Snubbed

Accessibility of Men Who Wear the Toga Only a Memory Since Screen of Secrecy Shuts Off Famous Marble Room

From The Tribune's Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, April 17.—While President Harding and every other agency of the government are trying to popularize the Federal government and are throwing open every door to the public, the Senate seems to be dodging the common people. In the feeling of a Republican majority, the Senate is secure for another year of a century, those who wear the togas of this government have suddenly developed a touch-me-not disposition. Until November 2 they were available in every sense of the word to the humdrum of their constituents and gave freely of their time to the voters of their states to honor them when they came to Washington. But now there is a vast difference and accessibility has given way to the somberness of self-sustained statesmanship.

Since the opening of the extra session a new veil of secrecy has been thrown about the movements of the senators. From time immemorial the lobby back of the Senate chamber and the room adjoining known as the Marble Room have been accessible to the constituents of the senators, and here the senators have visited with the people who sent them to the Senate and patched many a political fence.

Goal of Constituency Every constituent of a senator felt that a cup of happiness was filled to overflowing when he came to Washington and had a chat with his senator in the Marble Room, and when he got home he told his friends about the senator's visit. The senator, in turn, extended by the man they had sought to Washington to be their senator. This year the constituents are coming in droves. The White House, for many years closed to the people, is now open to the constituents of the senators, and the executive departments present a human attitude once more to the men and women who make the massive charge is being placed thereon.

The general causes of price inequalities and such remedies are summed up as follows:

"Aside from the unfair methods of competition with which we are daily confronted, the most important elements of transportation and credit are among the principal causes of the excessive price of many commodities. The excessive price of many commodities, prominent among which is coal, which vitally affects the cost of other commodities, is due to the effect of the excessive cost of living and the power of the people."

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"Fourth, interference with the channels of trade by distributors' trade associations, particularly by activities which tend to restrict the number of efficient 'regular' dealers, while shutting out new dealers seeking to sell at lower prices, and especially the activities of the distributors' organizations of consumers."

"Fifth, the conditions with respect to foreign combinations in the international market, to which reference has already been made."

"Aside from the remedies which may be afforded by improved transportation and credit facilities, we suggest consideration of the following:

"1. The bill which will meet judicial objections to the authority of this commission to continue its efforts to obtain and publish information respecting the ownership, production, distribution and profits in the basic industries more directly affecting the necessities of life—shelter, clothing, food and fuel—for the information of Congress and the promotion of the public welfare."

Strengthen Anti-Trust Laws "Vigorous prosecutions under the antitrust laws, and the enforcement of the revocable decrees already entered in such cases, with a view to strengthening them to meet present conditions, including also a closer scrutiny of the operations of the price associations, to ascertain whether, under the guise of beneficial associations, they are in fact violating the law. Examination of associations of distributors to determine whether violations of law exist, particularly restrictions of cooperative purchases, and whether any of the activities of such associations are not of public service."

"6. Positive encouragement of cooperative associations of agricultural producers and of cooperative consumers' organizations."

"7. The passage of measures aimed at the elimination of unnecessary assignment and brokerage operations, including also gambling in futures, pyramiding of reassignments and of jobbing sales, while not possible in present market conditions, was one of the causes of the buyers' strike, from which we now suffer, and may reappear whenever markets again become speculative."

Conference of Trading Nations

"6. Calling a conference of official representatives of the trading nations of the world to consider the question of clearing the channels of international trade so as to eliminate undesirable combinations and to promote fair competition."

"6. Protection of the farmer against the more closely organized elements with which he has to deal, by extending Federal assistance in giving more adequate and timely information concerning foreign and domestic market conditions and in affording more ample and suitable local market and storage facilities for the service and conservation of perishable farm products."

Anastasia Will Undergo New Operation in Paris

Then She and Prince Christopher May Come to America to Make Permanent Home

ATHENS, April 17.—Princess Anastasia, the former Mrs. William B. Leeds, of New York, will be taken in a few weeks to the American Hospital in Paris, where she will undergo another operation. Prince Christopher, her husband, will accompany her. The French government has authorized M. de Billy, the French Minister here, to take the princess to the American Hospital in Paris. The princess is expected to be in Paris by the end of the month. Prince Christopher said that once in the free atmosphere of the United States he would never return to Greece. He is much perturbed over the military, political and dynastic situation.

South Counts More Than 100 Dead in Storm

Remote Parts of Six States Swept by Tornadoes and Heavy Rain Are Cut Off and Their Loss Unknown

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