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FOLEY URGES CUT IN COSTS OF BUILDING

Raymond M. Foley, national housing administrator, asserted today that housing costs "can be reduced" and urged "material producers and fabricators, brokers, real estate developers, merchandisers, contractors and labor" to do it.

His call for "immediate action in these fields" appeared to be a new step in the administration's "moral suasion" campaign to bring prices down, particularly in the building field. Housing Expediter Frank Creedon already has issued a similar appeal.

Foley's statement shared attention with a report by the National Planning Association that "if orderly price reductions do not become more general, business must share the blame for the slump that is then sure to come."

"Many prices today are badly out of line," said a report from the association's business committee on national policy, and "business as a whole looks with disfavor on those business elements that are out of step."

Signers of the report include Beardsley Ruml, chairman of the board of R. H. Macy & Co.; S. C. Allyn, president of the National Cash Register Company; Eugene Burgess, vice president of General Mills, Inc., and Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric Company.

They said business men owe it to themselves and their country to look hard at the prices they are charging and the prices they are paying and to start now to bring down any that are too high."

"Purchasing power of the average American is lower today than last summer," the report said, "although business is producing more and more goods, which he is expected to buy. That is why retail sales are lagging and inventories are beginning to cause some worries.

"Every informed business man recognizes that abnormally high earnings such as these (in 1946 and 1947) which have brought the average return to levels attained before the war only in 1928 and 1929—cannot last."

The association, a private organization devoted to planning in agriculture, business, labor and government, said that business men "are not alone responsible" for the price situation, but that the responsibility "for leading the country out of it . . . is squarely up to business men."

At the same time, Chester Bowles, former OPA chief, declared that "Republican irresponsibility has cost the American public $8,000,000,000 in the last ten months—and the bill is mounting fast."

"That staggering sum," he said, "was paid by the American housewife and business man in the form of unnecessarily high prices as a direct result of the Republican party's sabotage of price controls last June."

Bowles stated his views in a special article for the Democratic Digest, published by the Women's division of the Democratic National Committee.

Bowles said GOP leaders in Congress "have launched a campaign to establish the fantastic charge that labor is to blame for skyrocketing prices." Actually, he wrote, wage rates have risen only 9.5 per cent in the last ten months, while wholesale prices of industrial products have risen more than 30 per cent and consumers' prices 20 per cent.

"Instead of increasing," he said, "workers' real wages—the goods their money wages actually buy—have been cut deeply."

Profits, on the other hand, have "zoomed," he contended.

Foley urged all elements involved in housing costs determinations to "make all possible adjustments."

U. S. SPECIALISTS PUT FOUR FOODS ON PLENTIFUL LIST

To the list of plentiful foods for May, marketing specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture at College Park have announced four additions — canned peas, tomato juice, cottage cheese and sauerkraut.

The specialists explained that a record pack of peas was canned in 1946—41,000,000 cases, or almost 1,500,000 more than in 1945.

Grocery shelves generally have good supplies of all grades of canned peas, it was pointed out. But largest stocks are Grade C or standard.

These generally sell for less than the fancier grades, which are more evenly matched in size and color, but they offer about the same nutritive value.

Such peas, the specialists pointed out, are good buys for use in salads, stews and creamed or combination dishes.

Discussing the abundance of peas throughout the nation, local brokers declared that some distributors have purchased so heavily that, in the face of declining sales, they are selling at far below cost.

More tomatoes were used for juice last year, said the United States Department of Agriculture specialists, than for any other canned form. The result is that the supply of juice is abundant, a total of 20,000,000 cases having been packed last year.

Local brokers and food processing plant heads explained that, with labor scarce and wages high, it was necessary to curtail the canning of tomatoes, which must be steamed and skinned by hand, canners concentrating on production of tomato paste and juice, both of which require a minimum of labor.

Cottage cheese is plentiful, it is explained, because more skimmed milk is available for it now that Government buying of dried milk for military and other uses has been curtailed.

The pack of sauerkraut last year was enormous, and it has not moved fast on grocers' shelves or from wholesalers' warehouses, say observers. The result is that many grades are selling at new lows.

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From where I sit ... *by* Joe Marsh

Where's the Argument?

You should have heard Ed Carey and Spike Miller debating the merits of Guernseys versus Holsteins. Ed's our firechief, and Spike handles hardware—but to hear them argue you'd have thought that they'd been dairying for life.

Finally they put it up to Sam Carter, who *breeds* dairy cows! Sam hems and haws . . . and concludes there's a lot to be said for Holsteins, and about as much for Guernseys . . . take your pick!

Actually, Ed and Spike were like people arguing about—say, beer versus buttermilk. Folks who've never tasted beer will sometimes get mighty vehement about their choice of beverages. And folks who've never tasted buttermilk will be equally pig-headed.

From where I sit, it's in things we know nothing about that we get bigoted and stubborn. But when it comes to things we know a lot about, we're able to see both sides . . . be tolerant and reasonable . . . and above all, understanding.

Joe Marsh

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