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October - December

Correspondence 1947

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## **AMA Washington Newsletter [10/22/1947]**

American Municipal Association

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# WASHINGTON NEWS LETTER

Vol. XII - No. 37

October 22, 1947

WEEKLY REPORT FROM WASHINGTON FOR OFFICIALS OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE STATE LEAGUES

## National Forum

The national conference of municipal officials -- AMA's 24th annual meeting and America's top municipal event -- begins Nov. 2 at New Orleans. Additional program details were announced last week.

The hearing of the Joint Congressional Committee on Housing -- an unprecedented conference feature (News Letter Sept. 24) -- will be in the afternoon of Nov. 3 instead of Nov. 4, changed to permit more U.S. Senators and Representatives to participate. This event is attracting observers from several federal agencies and many institutions and organizations interested in housing and urban redevelopment. Like some other parts of the conference, it will be covered by press and radio reporters, and part will be broadcast on a national network.

The list of speakers is small but distinguished. While practically every session will be an open forum for the more than 500 officials representing the 9,250 municipalities which are members of AMA and the state leagues, outstanding speakers will present the subjects.

Among those from Washington who will address the conference or lead or participate in discussions are:

U.S. Attorney General Tom C. Clark of the President's Cabinet.

One of the U.S. Senators who is a member of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations which is working toward reorganization of federal, state and local tax systems.

## High Prices and Scarcities

Complaints of municipalities against high prices, or against the refusal of manufacturers or dealers to sell to municipalities, are sometimes followed by the suggestion that action be taken by the federal government. But what can be done?

The federal government (the administration, that is, and not the Congress) has no direct power to fix prices. The administration is doing what it can by antitrust action (News Letter Aug. 27) but antitrust suits are not likely to pull prices down.

Congress, of course, could authorize another price control program, but probably will not, mainly because necessary concomitants of price control are wage controls and rationing of consumer commodities. Only items under price control are sugar and syrups, and these must be decontrolled Oct. 31 under present law.

Federal authority to ration any commodities has also expired. Nor can any system of priorities, comparable to rationing, be instituted without specific authorization by Congress.

Members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Housing -- Rep. Gamble, N.Y., chairman, Senator McCarthy, Wis., vice chairman, Senator Sparkman, Ala., Rep. Boggs, La., Rep. Rains, Ala., and probably others.

Maj.-Gen. Philip B. Fleming, Administrator, Federal Works Agency.

James M. Landis, Chairman, Civil Aeronautics Board.

George W. Burgess, Assistant Administrator, Civil Aeronautics Administration, and other CAA officials.

The list also includes a number of the country's leading state and municipal officials who will speak briefly or lead discussions.

A number of Canadian and Central and South American mayors, representing their nations' municipal associations, will give the conference an interesting international flavor.

The program of entertainment is extensive -- a boat trip on the Mississippi, sight-seeing in the famous French Quarter, a get-acquainted party given by New Orleans' Mayor Morrison, a stage show by Louisiana Governor Jimmy Davis' famous troupe of entertainers, and especially for the ladies of the conference, a luncheon and garden tour.

Even the federal rent controls, such as they are, expire Feb. 29, unless Congress decides to extend the controls on the present basis into 1949. See page 2.

Municipalities are caught in the price spiral along with other consumers. The municipal government is as frustrated in the economic whirlwind as any housewife.

As for discrimination against municipalities -- the occasional refusal to sell scarce items to local governments or the fixing of a higher price to municipalities than to certain non-government buyers -- municipalities can take either of two steps. They can ask the courts for injunctions, or they can ask the Federal Trade Commission to examine the complaint for evidence of illegal discrimination.

AMERICA'S CITIES LOOK TO THE FUTURE - NATIONAL FORUM - 24th AMA CONFERENCE - NEW ORLEANS - ATTEND

This News Letter Comes To You As A Service Of Your State League Of Municipalities



## Grain Conservation

Charles Luckman's telegram to mayors got far from a 100% response. The telegram (below) was sent to mayors of the 1,072 cities over 10,000 (list furnished by AMA) at the end of the President's Citizens Food Committee's first week. Possibly a number of mayors either were not sold immediately on the Luckman program or felt this is not a municipal job. At any rate, three days after the Luckman wire, only 29 had promised to form conservation committees and issue meatless-Tuesday proclamations. By Thursday morning, however, the number had risen to 102, and more responses were arriving. (President Truman apparently decided not to issue a proclamation of his own. Instead he asked state governors to establish state-wide conservation programs.) In the van of participating cities were Buffalo, Chicago, Houston, Miami, Minneapolis, and New York.

But regardless of whether mayors and local committees participate, the country can expect a big-time publicity campaign for grain conservation. Last week the Luckman office was developing red-white-and-blue posters, advertising lay-outs (for free space like that for war bonds during the war), promotion kits, window emblems ("Save Meat, Save Wheat, Save the Peace") and press conferences and press releases were numerous. The Luckman office is financed by shifts of funds from federal departments and will cost upwards from \$250,000. Top executives, several of whom are officials of Lever Brothers soap company which Luckman heads (former Undersecretary of Interior Abe Fortas, former Congressman James M. Barnes) are serving without pay. The one aim is to reduce American consumption of whole grain by 100 million bushels for export to European countries.

## The Telegram

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TO ALL MAYORS OF CITIES OVER 10,000 POPULATION

OF COURSE YOU FULLY REALIZE THE GRAVE EMERGENCY CONFRONTING THE HUNGRY PEOPLE OF EUROPE AND THE RESPONSIBILITY THIS PLACES ON US AS A FREE PEOPLE.

THE DELUGE OF INQUIRIES WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED FROM INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING EVERY COOPERATION REQUIRES THE IMMEDIATE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOCAL CITIZENS FOOD COMMITTEE IN YOUR COMMUNITY. THE PRESIDENT AND THE CITIZENS FOOD COMMITTEE REQUEST MOST EARNESTLY, THEREFORE, YOUR FULL SUPPORT IN ORGANIZING YOUR COMMUNITY.

AS THE BASIC MOVE IN ORGANIZING YOUR COMMUNITY MAY WE RESPECTIVELY SUGGEST THAT YOU ISSUE A PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF THE CITIZENS FOOD COMMITTEE PROGRAM WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE FOUR BASIC POINTS OF THE PROGRAM.

1. USE NO MEAT ON TUESDAY. 2. USE NO POULTRY OR EGGS ON THURSDAY. 3. SAVE A SLICE OF BREAD EVERY DAY. 4. RESTURANTS TO SERVE BREAD AND BUTTER ONLY ON REQUEST.

WE URGE YOU TO APPOINT AT ONCE A LOCAL CITIZENS FOOD COMMITTEE FOR THE DURATION OF THE EMERGENCY INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL ORGANIZED GROUPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY SUCH AS CHURCHES, AMERICAN RED CROSS, SCHOOLS, WOMEN'S GROUPS, LABOR, BUSINESS, CIVIC, VETERANS, AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS.

WE WILL BE SENDING YOU FACTUAL DATA AND INFORMATION WHICH WILL ENABLE YOUR COMMITTEE TO FORMULATE AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN PATTERNED TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

WILL YOU PLEASE INFORM US AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE OF THE STEPS YOU ARE TAKING SO THAT THE COMMITTEE MAY FULLY SUPPORT YOU.

CHARLES LUCKMAN

CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT'S CITIZENS FOOD COMMITTEE

## Court

Two potentially important cases in the recently reconvened U.S. Supreme Court will test the constitutionality of real estate covenants and may have some bearing on the course of municipal segregation ordinances. Arguments will be heard in November.

To be sure of hotel  
reservations at New  
Orleans Nov. 2-6,  
wire AMA at Chicago

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