

OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

NEW HAVEN FIELD OFFICE
216 Crown Street
NEW HAVEN, CONN.

IN REPLY REFER TO:

August 21, 1943

TO: Joseph Basine - Attention: H. W. Smith
FROM: Raymond B. Mead, Area Price Representative
SUBJECT: Weekly Report August 16 - 21

Monday, August 16

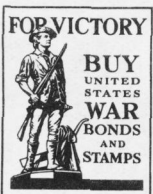
In the Hartford State Office all day and in the evening conducted a retail grocers meeting in the Meriden City Hall which was very well attended, there being seventy-five present. In the five-minute outline which I gave before presenting the picture and during the presentation of the picture, practically all the questions were covered which the grocers came prepared to ask. One man claimed to have brought twenty-two questions to the meeting with him and everyone was answered before the question period. There were only three questions during the question period, which I was able to answer satisfactorily.

Tuesday, August 17

At the New Haven Field Office all day contacting the Ansonia, Hamden, Milford, New Haven and West Haven Boards on the details of the program for the retail grocers meeting, including places to hold the meeting and especially means of getting good attendance.

In the evening attended the Middlesex County meeting in Middletown at which there was an attendance of something under sixty people. There were eight at the Price Panel meeting which Mr. Adams and Mr. Larraway conducted and at which Mr. Knight spoke for thirty-five minutes. I ran the projector.

The reaction which I obtained from Mr. Phelps, Chairman of the Middletown Price Panel, regarding a date for the retail food dealers meeting was: "You fellows may think that you are strong - you are not anywheres ~~as~~ near as strong as the Chamber of Commerce and before I can even tell whether we are going to have a meeting or not, I will have to take the matter up with them." I requested Mr. Phelps to contact me by phone as soon as the Price Panel decided what it would be possible to do about holding a meeting.



Weekly Report 8/16-8/21 (Cont'd)

Wednesday, August 18

Mr. Cook was able to obtain the use of the Commercial High School auditorium for our retailers meeting on the 24th, so I got busy at the local board to insure that there would be a good attendance at the meeting. We also invited to the New Haven meeting the food merchants from Cheshire, East Haven, Guilford and Madison and I requested the Price Panel Chairmen in these towns to especially invite their merchants.

Saw Mr. Hesselmeier, Retail Chairman, regarding progress he made ~~at~~ the West Haven meeting. Mr. Macauley, Price Chairman in Milford, confirmed the arrangements for the Milford meeting. Saw Mr. Backstrom, New Haven Price Chairman, regarding progress on appointment of a Consumer Chairman for New Haven, and he is still waiting to hear from Mr. Simonds, who was interviewing a prospect. Mr. Phelps, Price Chairman in Middletown, phoned me requesting me to come to his office tomorrow morning and we made an eleven o'clock appointment.

Thursday, August 19

Checked with the Hamden Board to see that all arrangements were completed for their retailer meeting ~~Tuesday~~ ^{Thursday} evening. Received a report from Mr. Eglise, Price Chairman in Wallingford, on their retailers meeting which is to be held tonight. Mr. Hesselmeier of West Haven requested some supplies. Saw Mrs. Anderson at the New Haven Local Board who requested pricing information which we could not give her locally. Her request was forwarded to the State Office.

At 11:00 A.M. met with Mr. Phelps, the Price Chairman in Middletown, and Mr. Robert Ehlinger, the Manager of the Mohican Company, who is to be in charge of the retail food dealers meeting, the date for which was set up as August 31 at 8:15, in the City Hall. Mr. Ehlinger and myself worked out detailed plans for getting a good attendance at the meeting and for the conducting of the meeting. Mr. Ehlinger is writing the Price Chairmen of the surrounding towns to invite their merchants to attend this meeting. The surrounding boards are East Hampton, Portland, Cromwell, Middlefield, Durham and Higganum.

After this meeting, I went with the Area Office Manager, Mr. Wetmore, to hear a black market story from Mr. Ross, Manager of the Ethel Gordon Shop at 174 Main Street, Middletown. Mr. Ross told us frankly that every time garments are purchased from the wholesalers in New York or Boston that they have to pay 25¢ to \$2.00 a garment ~~black~~ market money and that also terms of payment have been changed so that everything comes net and the customary discounts have been discontinued. Mr. Ross will be interested to give names of outfits in either New York or Boston with whom he has had actual experience. He states that the wholesale garment trade is almost one hundred percent black market operation today and that if something is not done about it very shortly, the ceiling prices will be violated everywhere, or else the retail merchant will be out of business.

Weekly Report 8/16-8/21 (Cont'd)

In the evening attended retail food merchants meeting in Hamden where there were only twelve out of a possible fifty merchants in attendance. I do not know the reason for the poor attendance unless it was that the merchants were not followed up by telephone calls and possibly there may be some resentment on their part for the slightly rough treatment they may have been receiving from the Price Chairman who is a very meticulous person and insists on everyone being right on the button. Of course, there are various ways of insisting and I imagine that he might not have been too tactful in some of his approaches.

Friday, August 20

Listened to the story of Mr. Wilcox of Birdsall & Wilcox, Mayonnaise manufacturers, and suggested that they write the Legal Department in Hartford to discover if there is any relief for them in the regulations. They claim that costs have gone to the point where they no longer can sell at ceiling and stay in business.

Interviewed Mr. Scheibel of the Whitney Garage and helped him compute price on a used truck.

Saw Mr. Tucker, the New Haven Retailer Chairman, and he agreed that Mr. Joseph Keller, the representative of women's apparel, be requested to see that all of the merchants who handle women's, misses and children's outer wear be contacted regarding their attendance at the apparel meeting in the Chamber of Commerce next Monday morning.

Saw Mr. Backstrom, Price Chairman in New Haven, who seemed rather discouraged with the fact that he had not been given a Consumer Chairman yet by the Chairman of New Haven War Price and Rationing Board, and also because no money for stencils for the addresseograph is forthcoming from the State Office. He was in a fault finding mood and very plainly spoken. He told me that it was the opinion of the local Price Panel that while I was a good fellow and willing enough that I just never got them the things they asked for, at least not as many as they asked for, so the State Office can expect to hear from Mr. Backstrom shortly along this line. I tried to diminish his discouragement, but felt that it was not the opportune time to try to encourage him. Believe that he will continue to serve as Chairman and that the next time I see him will not be one of his off days.

Made out the report brief today, 8/19, because of the availability of a stenographer.

*Basine
Adams*

August 28, 1943

RECEIVED
AUG 30 1943
PRICE DIVISION

*Rec'd by me
@ 10:40 - 8-31
H. L. Kramer*

TO: Joseph Basine - Attention: H. W. Smith
FROM: Raymond B. Mead, Area Price Representative
SUBJECT: Weekly Report August 23 - 28

Monday, August 23

At Hartford. Had an opportunity to discuss with Mr. Basine some personal problems and arrange for annual leave. At the Price Field Mens Session, emphasis was placed on the desirability of the retailer knowing what the wholesaler's ceilings are. In the late afternoon, saw Mr. Beckwith, who gave a very favorable report of the attendance and interest in the apparel meeting which he held at 10:30 in the morning at the Chamber of Commerce in New Haven. In the evening, showed retailer food picture at the West Haven Town Hall. The meeting was very late in starting due to the fact that we had to wait for the Town Court to finish its session. There were 42 present and after the showing of the picture, Mr. Laraway answered questions for the merchants.

Tuesday, August 24

Tuesday morning spent three hours at the office and in the afternoon checked with Mr. Backstrom and Mr. Tucker and Mr. Braus on the evening meeting. We were very much disappointed at the attendance at the evening meeting there being only about 60 retail grocers present. Percentage wise this was a very poor showing. Mr. Laraway was present at this meeting and listened to the problems which the merchants voiced which were mainly two. First, the fact that they were being overcharged in many instances but did not know what the wholesalers ceiling price was and were afraid to ask. The other complaint being that they are still being squeezed with the tie-in agreement.

There were 13 calls at the New Haven office. Four consumer complaints which were referred to the local boards, 3 requests for information by price clerks, one question from a lawyer asking whether a manufacturer could continue cash or quantity discounts to his client a retailer. One request for forms and two requests for regulations.

Wednesday, August 25

At the East Haven Price Panel early in the morning trying to get a report on the store check up but they still do not have it completed because one woman has not yet turned in her report. Spent two hours at the New Haven office with correspondence, some information which

I had to dig out of the regulation. In the afternoon kept an appointment with Mr. Eglise, Price Chairman of the Wallingford Board, at which time we discussed the manufacturers problem the questions on which I wrote in to the state office. In the evening attended a Milford retailer grocers meeting at the American Legion Hall showed the picture and had a very lively question and answer period at the end of the meeting. There were 26 present at the meeting.

There were 12 calls at the New Haven office only one of which was from a consumer. We had three requests for regulations, 6 requests from price clerks and 2 requests for forms.

Thursday, August 26

Following up yesterdays query from Mr. Basine as to the reasons for the poor attendance at the retailer meeting at the Commercial High School in New Haven on Tuesday evening the 24th, I personally interviewed Mr. Tucker, Mr. Braus and Mrs. Anderson and wrote a complete report to Mr. Basine. My personal belief that the reason for the poor attendance is that the factors which were mentioned by the three people interviewed may have had some effect but the underlined reason is the lack of a properly functioning consumer group. Mr. Simmonds, Chairman of the New Haven Board, was in the office at 216 Crown Street and I asked him what progress was being made on the consumer chairman and he seems to want to wait a few days to get a final decision from a woman he has approached. In the afternoon went to Derby with the purpose of seeing if I could not get the consumer panel in active operation there. Mr. O'Keefe, the Price Panel Chairman, has an inclination to take things easy and one has to push him gently and positively in order to get action. He has promised that he will get his consumer group into operation next week. In the evening, attended the retailer grocers meeting at the Ansonia City Hall which was attended by the retailers from both Derby and Ansonia. Seymour and Beacon retailers were invited but none were present. There is a total registration on the board census of 70 retailers in Ansonia and 44 in Derby making a total of 124. We had an attendance of 142 at the meeting which I think speaks excellently for the effort put into getting attendance to the meeting mainly on the part of Miss Alyce Kewalis, Price Clerk of the Ansonia Board, who on Mr. Riordan's recommendation, personally called ^{all} the grocers which she could reach on the telephone to follow up the letter of invitation. It really got results.

There were three calls from consumers, one from wholesaler, one from a garage operator and one from a person who was charged for selling a washing machine over the ceiling price. A jobber called for information on wholesale prices on potatoes and Miss Romano at Mr. Smith's request, called five local boards all of whom promised to send in their laundry survey before the day was out. Two calls for information from price clerks and the consumer chairman, Mr. White, was very anxious to get pledge cards for consumers in Hamden.

Friday, August 27

At the Crown Street office until 11:30 then went to Derby where I

checked plans for the consumer panel activities and congratulated the price clerk for getting the retail merchants at the Ansonia meeting. Went over her price book with her and suggested that she should make additions. At the Ansonia board left a supply of Bulletin #35 and congratulated Miss Kewalis, the price clerk, on the splendid attendance at the Ansonia meeting the night before. All the girls in the office agreed that she certainly did a job in getting the merchants out. At Seymour, talked with Mr. James Shay, the board chairman, regarding the appointment of Mrs. Lane as price panel chairman in place of Percy D. Chamberlain who is forced to resign because of ill health. Mrs. Lane is at present, consumer chairman and is doing a splendid job. It was Mr. Shay's suggestion that she be appointed price chairman and I believe she will make an excellent one. Arrangements were made for a retailer food merchants meeting for 8:30 P.M., September 1, at the local board quarters because none of the Seymour merchants got to the Ansonia meeting. The senior clerk at the board asked about tie-in sales and the refusal of merchants to sell items to a particular party. I told her that tie-in sales were illegal and the party should complain to the price panel. I told her a merchant has the right to refuse to sell an item to an individual although it may not be good business practice to do so. Went to Meriden to straighten out a mix up about the time of a consumer meeting. It had been set by the consumer chairman for 8:00 o'clock Monday evening, August 30 but the local office manager took it upon himself to change the time to 10:30 Monday morning for a reason unknown. This seems a very poor time for housewives so the consumer chairman personally telephoned all the members of his committee changing the time back to 8:30 as originally established by him. Mr. Smith from the state office has agreed to be present at the meeting. On the way back, stopped at the Wallingford board and left some price material which they had requested and seemed very glad to get.

Saturday, August 28

Listened to the story of a manufacturer of horse raddish and convinced him that he has to continue under GMPR and that there would be very little likelihood of relief on price simply because the price of horse raddish roots have gone up. Talked with Mr. White, consumer chairman of the Hamden Board, and tried to get some of the gestapo ideas out of his head he even being anxious to employ entrapment.

Dictated the narrative report and assigned work to be done during my two-day annual leave.