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FULL FOOD INQUIRY ASSURED IN SENATE

Hearings, Starting Today, Will Pay Special Attention to the Black Market

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WASHINGTON, March 25—A thorough investigation of the country's food situation was promised today by Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma, whose Agriculture subcommittee in hearings beginning tomorrow morning will look into reports of acute shortages in some foods, surpluses in others, and of a flourishing black market.

Meat, which has recently become particularly scarce in many places, will be the first subject of study. Witnesses will include spokesmen for the War Food Administration, the Office of Price Administration, the Department of Agriculture, and for the meat packaging industry.

Later the investigation will turn to supplies of wheat, corn, butter and other commodities.

Senator Thomas said that his group wanted to learn all the facts on food before turning to any solution and that the investigation would be pursued constructively to that end.

The study was authorized by the Senate last week following charges on the floor that the food production program had been mishandled. At a press conference last week President Roosevelt promised to throw more light on the food situation and his statement, expected in a few days, is eagerly awaited on Capitol Hill as the Senate investigation gets under way.

The House, several of whose members took the floor last week to denounce phases of food production and distribution, has received resolutions directing a study similar to the Senate's but has not approved such an undertaking.

Black Market to Be Studied

Senators on the agricultural subcommittee will keep a vigilant eye on any evidences of black market,

Senator Thomas said, and, if the examination indicates this to be a principal source of the trouble, drastic legislation aimed at black market operators will be proposed.

Pointing out that Chester Bowles, OPA administrator, succeeded yesterday in obtaining approval of the Senate Appropriations Committee for an additional \$565,000 to investigate the meat shortage, Senator Thomas said that his subcommittee would be interested in all information compiled by the OPA.

The inquiry into food will run, the chairman suggested, as long as the food problem persists, and remedial legislation will be submitted to the Senate whenever sufficient information is developed.

On the subcommittee with Mr. Thomas are Senators Burton K. Wheeler of Montana and Tom Stewart of Tennessee, Democrats; and Senators George D. Aiken of Vermont and Harlan J. Bushfield of North Dakota, Republicans.

While this food study gets under way, the long-standing manpower legislation will occupy principal attention of both houses of Congress. The compromise bill approved yesterday by House and Senate conferees is expected to reach the House floor tomorrow or Tuesday.

Action there is expected to be completed before the Easter recess, unless lack of a quorum should delay the vote. A large number of Representatives have already left Washington to spend Easter in their home communities.

Action Expected on Manpower

Prompt action may also be expected from the Senate, and final Congressional action on the measure which has occupied both Houses since January may be completed in time to send it to President Roosevelt for signature this week.

The bill, as it came out of conference, provided a compromise giving James F. Byrnes, Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion, power to "freeze" labor selectively in any plant or area in the country. It also gives Mr. Byrnes authority to use any agency he chooses to carry out the bill's provisions.

It is generally believed that the choice would fall to the War Man-

power Commission, which has labor-management groups already set up in all war plant areas and would thus be in a position to move fast in remedying critical manpower situations.

Meanwhile, the Senate Military Affairs Committee, under Senator Elbert D. Thomas of Utah, will resume tomorrow its hearings on the House-approved nurse draft bill.

The House Banking and Currency Committee, under Representative Brent Spence of Kentucky, will lay aside temporarily its consideration of the Bretton Woods proposals to take up a study of continuing subsidy payments on strategic metals, minerals and petroleum.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee, headed by Representative Sol Bloom of New York, will continue its hearing on the proposed commission on war war crimes.

The Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation, of which Representative John E. Rankin of Mississippi is chairman, will look into the treatment of disabled men in veterans' hospitals, with Brig. Gen. Frank T. Hines, Veterans Affairs Administrator, as witness.