

PUBLIC DEMANDS START PROBE OF HIGH FOOD COST

Palmer Discusses Best Methods to Pursue to Bring About Reduction.

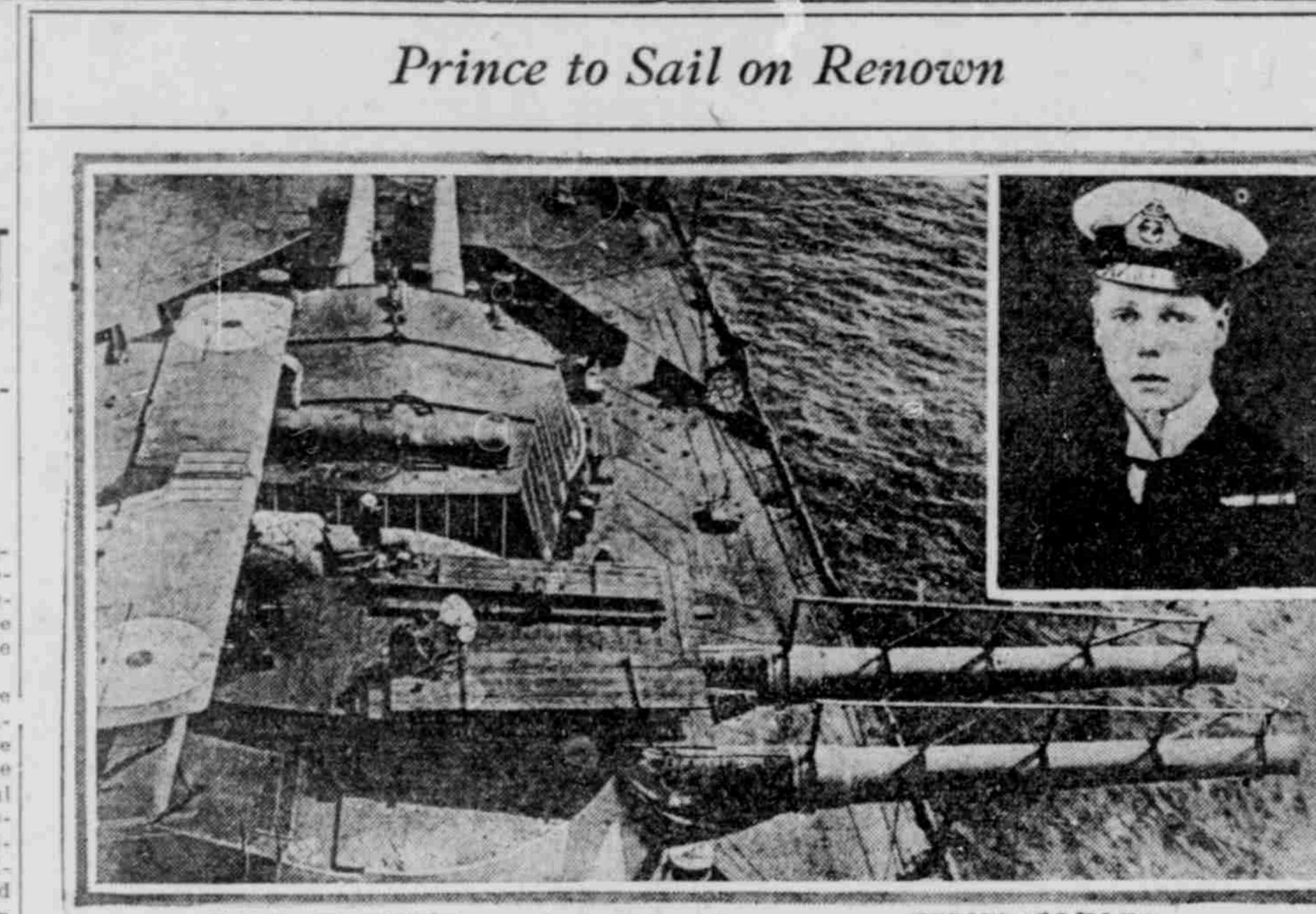
WASHINGTON, Aug. 1.—Government machinery was set in motion Thursday in response to demands from the public that some official action be taken to relieve the high cost of living.

Prices, as they affect the average citizen, assumed first place in interest in the capital. At the white house Pres' Wilson was said to be giving "deep and very thoughtful consideration" to problems presented to him and the railroad administration by members of the railroad brotherhoods, who represented that prices would have to come down or wages go up, if social unrest was not to develop into upheaval. In the senate and house, the situation gave rise to several resolutions to investigate the cause of existing price levels, another to reduce the volume of currency in circulation as a means of deflating prices, one to request the attorney general to stop speculation in foods on exchanges, and another to sell this year's wheat crop at market prices instead of at the government guarantee, the difference to be made up by the government.

Officials in Session.

Late Thursday Atty. Gen. Palmer met eight high government officials whom he had summoned to his office for a discussion of high costs and the best methods to pursue to effect a reduction. After a general talk, lasting nearly three hours, the conference disbanded to meet again, probably next week, for further counsel based on additional information to be collected in the meantime. Those attending the conference included Secretaries Glass, Houston, Redfield and Wilson, Director Gen. Hines, Chairman Murdock of the federal trade commission, Asst. Secy. of the Treasury Loeffinwell and W. B. Colver of the federal trade commission.

It developed Thursday that demands for more wages were pending before the railroad administration from several hundred thousand employees. Perhaps the frankest



This view from the crow's nest of H. M. S. Renown, on which the Prince of Wales will make his headquarters when he visits America next month, shows some of the British fighting craft's armament and a seaplane ready to "take off" from a gun turret. The prince will make a brief visit to Washington, later visiting New York, where the Renown will be waiting in the harbor. It is believed that, following the precedent set by King George when Pres' and Mrs. Wilson visited London, the prince will be a guest at the white house during his stay in the capital.

talk which government officials have heard in a long time came in this connection, in the statement of W. G. Lee, president of the trainmen, before the wage adjustment board. Mr. Lee told the board that an increase in wages was not the proper solution of the present economic hardships under which workmen are laboring, because they would be followed by new increases in the cost of everything which would more than absorb the additional pay. Until all classes get together to stop "profiteering," he said, the only thing for every one to do is to get all the wages he can, a course which he declared would result eventually in precipitating the "upheaval" now staring the country in the face.

Food by Mail.

As a step toward the high prices, plans are being made by Secy. Baker, Postmaster Gen. Burleson and Rep. Kelly of Pennsylvania, to sell through the parcel post surplus army food stocks valued at \$124,000,000.

Officials who attended the attorney general's conference declined to

discuss what took place. Mr. Palmer stated that the conference was called chiefly for the purpose of making a survey of the situation, developing any information on which the head of the nation's law enforcement machinery might act to curb profiteering.

"It seems to be a universal pastime, putting this thing up to the attorney general," Mr. Palmer said smiling. "Even the governors have taken to blaming this department for existing price levels."

No Laws Apply.

In response to questions Mr. Palmer admitted that there was no law by which prices could be lowered directly, but he declined to say whether new legislation was needed to enable the department to punish men who may be guilty of profiteering.

"There is a great deal of good law on the statute books," the attorney general said.

When a course of action is decided upon, the federal trade commission is understood to be ready to supply the most extensive collection of industrial information ever gathered

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British Workers to Be Bettered by Law

LONDON, July 25.—(Correspondence).—To provide adequate living wages and to set a limit of 48 hours as a week's work is declared to be the purpose of two important bills which are being prepared for action in parliament.

These two measures are understood to be the result of an agreement between representatives of employers, of trade unions and of the minister of labor, acting as a national industrial conference. They are described as "government bills on maximum working hours and minimum time rates."

The wage bill as drawn up provides for an inquiry by a commission to decide what shall be the minimum wages for adults and for young persons, the commission to consider the cost of living. It is also provided that the minimum wage shall be adequate to meet the increased living cost.

The bill intended to make 48 hours constitute a week's work does not apply to domestic servants, seamen on ocean-going vessels, nor to employees in positions of trust and confidence. An inquiry is to be held regarding the working conditions of domestic servants and seamen to determine whether they can be brought within the scope of the bill.

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