ONE DOLLAR A YEAR INADVANCE

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town, Md. Phone 2161. Res. 2001.

Friday, November 6, 1953

Shopping in Prague

U.S. News & World Re- dollar taken in." port has published a "Memo It is time that fact supfrom Prague," which is des-planted illusion in discuscribes as the first report by sion of the meat business. an American in nearly three years. The writer entered communist Czechoslovakia as a guest of the U.S. Am-

bassador. Most of the memo deals with prices in Prague's state cwned retail stores. The avindustrial erage worker earns \$114 a month. A pair of nylon stockings cost \$13.-50, and a pair of solid leather shoes for women run from \$50 to \$80. Sufficient good wool materials to make a man's suit cost \$420. Soap is \$2.25 a cake and coffee \$22 a pound. A soviet-made chocolate bar, the size of our nickel ones, command 80 cents. Gasoline is sold at \$4.-50 a gallon.

Since this report was made, the government has announced price cuts on some foods and consumer goods. But that has not chan ged the situation materially.

It may be wondered how the Czech people manage to live at all in these circumstances. The answer is that the government allows them sufficient low-cost foods, notably cabbage and cauliflower, to make subsistence pos-

Communism-which outlaws competition and private operation and ownership of property alike—is suppos ed to bring the masses of people wonderful living stan dards. This little account of what the consumer faces in Prague refutes that lie completely. By comparison, everything in one of our Am erican retail stores, when the price is considered in the light of our incomes, is an unimaginable bargain. And American retailing is based firmly on the rock of private ownership in a free. competitive economy.

Devil Theory of Economics

One of the best brief commentaries yet written on the economics of the meat business recently appeared in editorial columns of the New York Times.

The editorial began by observing that "few things concern so many Americans every day—and hence are so politically explosive—as the price of meat." When pri ces go up, it is the consumer who complains, often loudly. And when thy go down, as has been the case, during the past year, the editorial continued, the meat packers are the traditional scapegoats. They are charged, often by politicians whose eye are fixed firmly on the voters, with exploiting and gouging consumer and producer alike, to their own extortionate profit.

Then the Times said, in the key paragraph of its editorial, "This devil theory of economics completely ignores the reality that between the times Texas steer is sent to marke and the time some of that animal reaches the

consumer a great deal of effort has been expended and GEORGE J. STEINFELT, Owner Few industries work with a Business Hours—8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. more perishable product than the meat packers; few, have to provide the commun ity with a more varied group of end products from the ini tial raw material; few have Take all checks for advertising, to contend with more comabscription or printing payable plex patterns of changing consumer taste and seasonal fluctuations of supply. And the reward at the end, as measured by the ratio of profits to sales, is often less than one cent out of every

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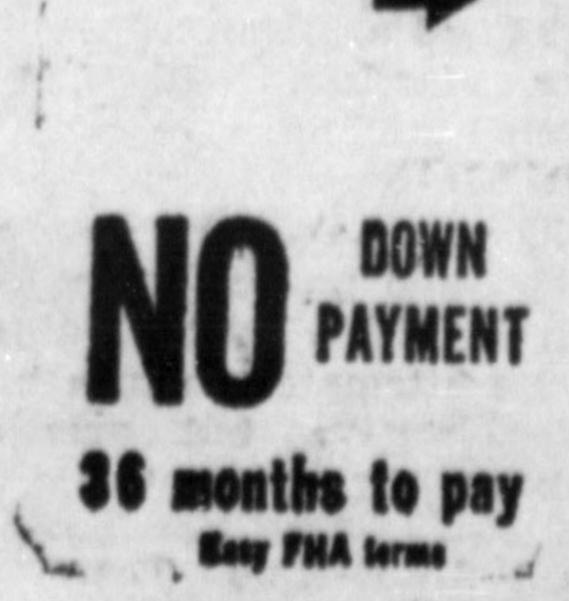
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