

World and Nation

Prices expected to rise in 1986

Sluggish economy predicted

Associated Press
 WASHINGTON — Despite a year-end surge in food and fuel prices that economists called temporary, retail prices rose only 3.8 percent in 1985, held to 4 percent or lower for the fourth consecutive year, the government said Wednesday.

But the low overall inflation rate was accompanied by the slowest growth in the U.S. economy since the recession year of 1982. In a separate report, the government said the Gross National Product expanded by a lackluster 2.3 percent in 1985 — even slower than previously reported.

Economists said the twin reports

pointed toward another year ahead of sluggish growth with moderately rising prices.

"We think 1986 will be a continuation of the pattern we had in 1985," said Lawrence Chimerine, president of Chase Econometrics, a private forecasting firm based in Bala Cynwyd, Pa. "There is no danger of a recession, but we're not likely to see an economic boom either."

The Labor Department's Consumer Price Index of 3.8 percent would have been lower had it not been for a bulge in energy and food prices in November and December.

The index, which is based on the prices for a variety of goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living, was 4 percent in 1984, 3.8

percent in 1983 and 3.9 percent in 1982 — well down from a high of 13.3 percent in 1979.

For December, consumer prices rose 0.4 percent, a slower rate of increase from the 0.6 percent rise in November but a bit ahead of the year's average monthly increase of 0.3 percent, the department said.

Fuel price increases began to abate in December, and government analysts said they expected even further drops in gasoline and heating oil in the months to come following a decline in world crude oil prices.


Declining crude oil prices, the result of a glut and disorganization within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, had not yet shown up in the December CPI.

The index showed gasoline prices increasing 1 percent, compared to 1.4 percent rise of November.

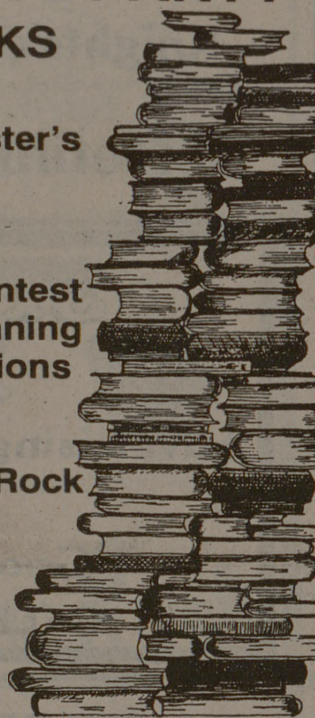
For all of 1985, overall energy prices rose a modest 1.8 percent.

Meat prices, which had shot up in November, rose far less rapidly in December, although skyrocketing prices for fresh lettuce and tomatoes kept food prices relatively high through the end of the year, the department said.

The separate report on the Gross National Product, released by the Commerce Department, reflected a downward revision of one-tenth of a percent from the 2.4 percent estimated last month.

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MIA's in Vietnam still sought

Associated Press
 WASHINGTON — Members of Congress who visited Vietnam and Laos received nothing to confirm the belief that American servicemen are still being held prisoner there, the head of the delegation said Wednesday.

"I don't want to raise any false hopes," Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, told a news conference called to report on the delegation's recently concluded Southeast Asian tour.

Murkowski, chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said the panel will hold hearings next week on the possibility American prisoners remain in captivity in Southeast Asia more than a decade after the end of the war.

A top Pentagon official had said last week that the Vietnamese government has pledged to join U.S. authorities in investigating nearly a hundred "live-sighting reports" of Americans missing in Indochina.

Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., another member of the delegation who returned last week from the nine-day overseas tour, said Wednesday he believes Americans are there.

But he refused to say whether he believes these Americans are prisoners, raising the possibility they may be defectors.

He noted that in recent months,

the Vietnamese government had asked the populace to look hard for the remains of soldiers from the war.

Officially, the U.S. position is that the government cannot flatly rule out the possibility that American prisoners are still being held.

The Vietnamese refused repeated appeals by the group to permit U.S. teams to visit and check the live sighting reports, but have been more forthcoming on helping to turn up remains...
Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska.

The United States is pushing for a full accounting of the 2,441 Americans still listed as unaccounted for, including 1,797 in Vietnam.

Vietnam has steadfastly denied that it holds any U.S. prisoners, but it also has refused to permit American investigators to enter the country and check out the reports. In recent months, however, the

Vietnamese have begun investigating reports from their own people involving the status of missing Americans and have allowed joint U.S.-Vietnamese teams to conduct excavations at sites where American planes are known to have crashed during the war.

There have been recurring reports of U.S. prisoners still being held, and Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Armitage said Jan. 13 that 95 such "live sighting reports" remain under investigation.

Murkowski said the group met with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach and also with European ambassadors stationed in Hanoi.

The Vietnamese refused repeated appeals by the group to permit U.S. teams to visit and check the live sighting reports, said Murkowski, but have been more forthcoming on helping to turn up remains of American servicemen.

More than 30 sets of remains have been turned over in the past six months, and the Vietnamese promised information on 50 others next month, Murkowski said. He added, however, the type of information to be provided remains to be seen.

Comedian sues tabloid for report

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Eddie Murphy has sued The National Enquirer for \$60 million over a report that the comedian was haunted by the slaying of his father.

The suit, filed in federal court here Tuesday, asks for a jury trial.

The article, which appeared Nov. 19, was headlined, "Eddie Murphy Haunted By Dad's Brutal Murder — He's Afraid Hell Die The Same Horrible Death."

Court papers allege the Enquirer "wove a totally false and defamatory article" about the death of Charles Edward Murphy, who was fatally stabbed by a girlfriend in 1969.

The suit calls the headline "outrageous and written in a manner calculated to boost sales" and said the story portrayed Murphy as paranoid, juvenile, insecure and unstable.

Paul Wolff, a lawyer for the Enquirer, declined to comment Wednesday, saying he had not seen the court papers.

Union asks governor to remove Guard troops

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Minn. — National Guard troops cordoned off an entrance to a strikebound meatpacking plant Wednesday, and workers drove through to reopen the factory that authorities had closed for one day to avert violence.

The troops, carrying billy clubs and bundled in arctic gear, formed a double line to keep strikers about 50 yards from people entering the George A. Hormel & Co. plant, where 1,500 workers walked off the job five months ago.

At least 150 cars entered the plant through the cordoned-off north

gate after receiving instructions on local radio stations.

The plant reopened Jan. 13., and tension has run high since Monday, when the first replacement workers began taking the places of union members. On Wednesday, as temperatures dipped near zero, the scene was relatively calm.

"No one has tried to cross the Guard's line," said Larry Gullickson, a member of the striking Local P-9 of the International United Food and Commercial Workers. "If you go near them, they'll chase you away."

Chuck Nyberg, Hormel's senior

vice president, said "We are under siege in this town and we think it's important the Guard are here."

Deryl Arnold, plant manager, said "We've had a goodly number of people who have returned and we're in the process of hiring more replacement workers. The plant is open."

Union members, who forced the plant to close Tuesday by taunting and mimicking Guard members and harassing returning workers, called on Gov. Rudy Perpich to remove the peacekeeping force. He refused.

The union, in a prepared statement, said, "The National Guard is not needed here. They never were needed here."

"The presence of the National Guard in the city of Austin... is leading to a breakdown of law and order," the statement said. It accused the Guard of harassing citizens and vandalizing vehicles.

The force was increased from 800 Tuesday night to assure the plant could reopen.

Local P-9 went on strike Aug. 10 months after Hormel cut wages by 23 percent and dropped the wage from \$10.69 to \$8.25 an hour. The company said the move was needed for it to remain competitive.

Union workers at other Hormel plants accepted the concessions and now earn \$10 an hour.

Turbulence injures several airline passengers

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A United Airlines jet flying from Chicago to San Francisco hit severe turbulence over Utah on Wednesday, hurling screaming passengers against the ceiling and injuring 12 people.

Flight 127, a DC-8 carrying 138 passengers and a crew of six, landed safely in San Francisco, where medical personnel helped carry the injured off the plane, said airport spokesman Ron Wilson.

"It felt like the plane was falling to pieces," said passenger Grace Biesecker.

Most of those who were hurt suf-

"People waiting to go to the bathroom were flung up against the walls and ceilings and then just dropped."
— Gary Carner, passenger.

fered injuries when the plane "nosed up and then dropped down before stabilizing," said Wilson, who noted many passengers were not wearing seat belts.

Gary Carner, a mechanic from Farmington Hills, Mich., who was bound for a Hawaiian vacation, said there had been turbulence through most of the flight and "suddenly

there was a tremendous, tremendous vibration going through the entire plane.

"People waiting to go to the bathroom were flung up against the walls and ceilings and then just dropped," said Carner, who was wearing a seat belt. He said his wife, Shirley, was not wearing her belt and flew up against an overhead luggage compartment.

"I just grabbed her legs and pulled her back down to the seat. At that time, I didn't know what was going on," he said. "The vibration made your heart leap up into your throat."

Luggage slipped out from under seats and flew around the plane, Carner said. Then, seconds after he began, the turbulence stopped, and passengers left their seats to help others.

He said one man's head went through the plane's ceiling and a woman was knocked unconscious for about two minutes. Neither appeared to be seriously injured, said.

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