

POLL FINDS PRICES TOP U.S. CONCERN

Gallup Says Inflation far Outweighs Other Issues

The public's concern about high prices and inflation is paramount over other problems in the country, according to the latest Gallup Poll, released yesterday.

Eighty-nine per cent of the people rated the high cost of living as the nation's number one problem. The Gallup Poll, which began its surveys in 1935 said that this was the highest percentage that had ever cited the economy as the nation's top problem.

Inflation far outweighed the two other most often named problems in the country. "Dissatisfaction with government" worried 19 per cent of the people, and "corruption in government or the Watergate" was cited by 14 per cent.

Preceded Food Report

Gallup said that since February the percentage of Americans who viewed inflation as one of the top two problems in the country had jumped 30 percentage points. Public thinking, before February, centered on Vietnam.

"Among those citing inflation as the top problem, many singled out food prices specifically," according to the poll.

The Gallup survey, taken between Sept. 7 and 10, preceded the Government's report last week that food prices during the month of August made their biggest one-month rise in 27 years—6.1 per cent. The poll was also conducted before the Justice Department on Sept.

14 decided to present evidence of alleged political corruption by Vice President Agnew to a Federal grand jury.

Another recent survey by Gallup suggests that this vast citizen concern with inflation has important political implications. The Gallup poll found that 46 per cent of the public blamed the Federal Government for inflation, 25 per cent blamed labor and 19 per cent blamed business.

"Concern over economic problems is greater today than at any other time since the job-lean years of the late 1930's when one-sixth of the total working force was unemployed," the Gallup Poll said.

The Gallup interviewers asked 1,497 adults, "What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today," and what is the next most important problems.

Combining the results of both questions the Gallup Poll found the following problems important in the country.

- High cost of living89 %
- Dissatisfaction with government19%
- Corruption in government or Watergate14%
- Crime or lawlessness13%
- International problems ..11%
- Drugs10%