

Senate sparks energy bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate energy conferees broke their three-month impasse on President Carter's energy bill Tuesday by informally agreeing to support a compromise proposal to lift price controls from natural gas by Jan. 1, 1985.

Meanwhile, Sen. Russell Long, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said the other major part of Carter's plan — a tax on domestic crude oil — will not pass the Senate "under any imaginable set of circumstances."

Sen. Henry M. Jackson, D-Wash., leader of the Senate

conferees, said he will meet with House energy leaders on Wednesday in an effort to resume formal bargaining between the two chambers on the natural gas issue.

"We're no longer deadlocked," Jackson told reporters. "We're moving toward an agreement."

Although formal votes were not taken, it became clear late Tuesday afternoon that the proposal had the needed nine votes to end the deadlock among the 17 Senate negotiators.

Jackson indicated that he and five other Democrats on the panel

would support the measure. Three Republicans — Pete Domenici of New Mexico, James McClure of Idaho and Mark Hatfield of Oregon — also came out in support of the proposed compromise.

It was the first break in the stalemate that has stymied action on the president's energy bill since last Dec. 2, when House-Senate energy conferees first took up the natural gas pricing issue.

The House passed Carter's proposal to keep price controls on gas pricing issue.

The House passed Carter's proposal to keep price controls on natural gas, but the Senate voted

to deregulate the price of gas after two years.

Until Tuesday, leaders were unable to muster majority support among the Senate negotiators for any compromise proposal.

Under the tentative agreement, hammered out last week in three days of meetings attended by Energy Secretary James R. Schlesinger, price lids would come off newly found gas by Jan. 1, 1985. But either the president or Congress could reimpose them for a single two-year period.

The proposal would also allow the regulated price of natural gas to about double between now and when the lids come off.

Nuke plants send rates up

Wash. facilities blamed by BPA

PORTLAND, (AP) — Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) chief Sterling Munro says nuclear power plants being built in Washington state are the main reason BPA's electricity rates will almost double next year.

And he blamed much of the increase on delays and cost overruns that have added nearly \$3 billion to five nuclear plants proposed by the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS), an organization of public utilities in the Northwest.

Rate increases of 80-90 percent during 1979 will add "more than \$220 million annually in higher rates to be passed on to the consumer," Munro said.

"We are therefore very much concerned with the lack of progress of these plants," he said. "I intend to keep a close watch on developments in these projects and the actions that will be helpful in completing them."

Munro made the comments in the first issue of a monthly newsletter that will be distributed to BPA employees, utilities, the Northwest congressional delegation and the U.S. Energy Department. A BPA spokesman said the newsletter will be issued in a few days.

The power supply system has three plants planned or under construction at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation near Richland and two others in Western Washington.

WPPSS No. 2, 1,100 megawatt nuclear plant at Hanford, is about 50 percent complete.

But Munro said, "It has been delayed for three years for a number of reasons, including construction contract problems, federally required design changes, labor problems and the fact that it is WPPSS' first experience in construction of a nuclear plant."

Munro said the plant's original cost was \$394 million but the pricetag has now reached \$1.1 billion. And in the past three years, he said, the total cost of all five plants has grown from \$4.8 billion to \$7.7 billion.



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World at a glance

From Associated Press reports

New pump increases gas flow

ANCHORAGE—Flow capacity on the trans-Alaska pipeline jumped from 730,000 barrels to 1.2 million barrels daily Tuesday with the startup of a reconstructed pump station demolished in an explosion last summer.

The increased flow was expected to create a surplus of oil on the West Coast, but the pipeline owner companies had no immediate comment on where the additional oil would go.

The station was destroyed July 8 during startup of the \$7.7 billion line when workmen opened a check valve by mistake. One person was killed in the explosion and several other workmen were injured.

Mexico returns 35 prisoners

SAN DIEGO — Thirty-five Americans convicted of crimes in Mexico were returned to their homeland Monday, but with less fanfare than earlier exchanges.

The latest repatriates brought to 48 the number returned home since Friday. Among them were one woman and a convicted murderer. One man was flown directly to Fort Worth, Texas, hospital because of a back problem.

Thirty Mexicans—24 from federal prisons and 12 from state prisons in Texas — were flown home in a Texas International Air Lines jetliner from El Paso Monday morning.

Carter calls Tito 'true friend'

WASHINGTON—Pres. Carter welcomed Yugoslav Pres. Tito to the White House Tuesday, praising him as a "true friend" of the United States and as a symbol of Eastern Europe's yearning for freedom, independence and liberty.

In his brief remarks, Carter ignored the many differences in U.S.-Yugoslav relations and chose to dwell on Tito's personal accomplishments as the world's longest-serving head of government.

Walking salmon lead biologists on chase

SEATTLE (AP) — Knowing that salmon can't walk, fisheries biologists were startled when radio signals from transmitters attached to chum salmon began moving inland.

The biologists, under contract to Seattle City Light, were tagging chum salmon in the Skagit River with tiny radio transmitters as part of a study to determine if a dam and powerhouse could be built at Copper Creek, a Skagit tributary.

The transmitters emit a signal which biologists follow to learn more about the movement of salmon in the river.

But one day signals from two of the fish began beeping inland, according to the story reported in a

City Light-employee publication.

Each transmitter was worth \$300, so the consultants were anxious to get them back. They took off in pursuit, armed with a rifle for protection.

They found their radio gear about 50 yards from the river. But no fish.

A hungry black bear, or maybe two hungry black bears, had scooped up the two chum transmitters, identifying tags and all, and carried them into the woods.

Perhaps the bears did not care for the taste of the electronic equipment. At least, they didn't eat them. The fish, however, were gone, no longer of any help to anyone but the bears.

Carter considers seizing coal mines

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Carter administration is actively considering seizure of coal mines if striking miners defy a back-to-work order issued under the Taft-Hartley Act, a key White House official said Tuesday.

Special trade negotiator Robert Strauss said requesting seizure authority from Congress remains an option in the 92-day strike, although Pres. Carter rejected an immediate takeover when he invoked the Taft-Hartley Act on Monday.

"I don't think it's out the window but we've got to take a run at this," said Strauss of the effort to get miners back to work under a Taft-Hartley injunction. Strauss has been instrumental in administration efforts to settle the dispute.

Meanwhile, the board of inquiry Carter appointed under the Taft-Hartley Act began preparation of a report the president needs to seek a back-to-work court order. The

board called a closed meeting for Wednesday to hear from representatives of both sides in the dispute, and a spokesman said he expected the panel's report to be at the White House by Thursday.

And United Mine Workers Pres. Arnold Miller said in an interview Tuesday he believes some miners will obey a back-to-work order, but added, "There will be problems."

Miller, reflecting the feelings of many rank-and-file miners, said he would prefer to have miners return to work in government-operated mines rather than under a Taft-Hartley injunction.

Few administration officials have been willing to speculate on seizure of the mines out of concern that miners will be encouraged to defy a court injunction ordering them back to work.

Talk of government seizure had waned Monday following Carter's nationally broadcast Taft-Hartley announcement.

South Africa fails to pay U.N. billing

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — South Africa has paid no United Nations dues since 1974, when it was ejected from the General Assembly's fall session. But the white-ruled nation continues to enjoy its member privileges other than voting in the assembly, where it has never tried to return.

South Africa's bill has reached \$7.5 million since it was thrown out amid a black African campaign against its apartheid racial policy. The figure represents assessments both for the general U.N. budget and for the Mideast peace-keeping force.

South African diplomats say that every year since then they have sounded out other countries before the September opening of the assembly to check their prospects. So far, the South Africans say, they have had no encouragement to go back.

In the past, other U.N. countries

have been late paying bills or have refused to pay. Cambodia fell into delinquency for one month in 1977 and the Soviet Union in 1964-65 successfully challenged its assessment for peacekeeping troops in the Congo and Middle East.

Under a section of the U.N. charter — irrelevant to the Russian and Cambodian cases and never applied — a nation that falls two years behind on its assessments can lose its General Assembly voting power.

But of course, South Africa has no use for an assembly vote as long as it is not there.

Besides that, it escapes public exposure to lengthy denunciations from its critics, by now including nearly all U.N. members but especially the black Africans, their non-aligned comrades and the communists.

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