

Senators agree on buyout plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sens. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., and Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, have reached a tentative agreement that would allow some 380 timber companies to buy out lumber contracts with the federal government, a Metzenbaum aide said Sunday.

Under the terms of the agreement, each company will be able to buy its way out of government contracts for up to 200 million board feet, said Doug Lowenstein, special assistant to Metzenbaum.

He said the bill should reach the Senate floor sometime this week as Congress rushes to finish business before its Oct. 4 recess. If passed, the bill must still be approved by the House.

"The bill appears in good shape unless the (Reagan) administration decides to throw its body in front of it," Lowenstein said in a telephone interview.

In the past, the administration has consistently opposed allowing companies to buy their way out of government contracts.

Lowenstein estimated that the bailout would cost the government some \$100 million in lost revenue. However, he said the Agriculture Department has estimated the loss at between \$127 million and \$427 million.

Rates for the buyout would be calculated on a sliding scale based on each company's financial condition, Lowenstein said. Financially ailing, smaller firms will pay as little as \$10 per thousand board feet, while some of the industry giants will pay as much as \$45 per thousand board feet.

The problem arose, Lowenstein said, when the companies overbid on federal timber contracts in the late 1970s.

Following the downturn in the housing market in the early 1980s, the contracts, bid to high levels, became unprofitable for the companies.

V.M. "Whitey" Howard, vice president of Seneca Sawmill Co. of Eugene, Ore., said that his company is not holding out much hope that the contract

problem will be solved by legislation.

Howard's company is one of the plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit seeking to void these high-priced federal timber contracts.

He said the high-priced contracts are most burdensome to some of the smaller timber companies that are already having trouble surviving in today's lumber market.

Heroin production 'simple'

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — A man suspected of building a heroin production laboratory in Portland says the process is so simple a teen-ager could do it.

"A 13-year-old could make heroin," Ronald "Sandy" Jones told the Denver Post during an interview at the Boulder County Jail on Friday.

"If I was only interested in profit, I might publish a pamphlet and there'd be a thousand Ronnie Joneses next year."

Jones, 41, was arrested at a storage locker business near Boulder last July 11 when he was spotted by Sheriff's Capt. George Epp and police informant Paul McGuirk, a former friend of Jones.

He had been sought by authorities since May 1983 when they discovered what was described as a heroin laboratory in Jones's Longmont Colo. home.

During the ensuing months as a fugitive, Jones set up another heroin laboratory in a rented apartment at Portland, authorities added.

Since his arrest, Jones has been held in the Boulder jail in lieu of \$1.1 million bond.

Jones, a physics enthusiast, told the Post he began making heroin a few years ago to supply his own habit.

The process to make heroin "sort of fell into my lap one day," he said.



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