

Witnesses Make Pilgrimage To Plead for Action To Curb Air Pollution

By MARGARET A. KILGORE
United Press International
WASHINGTON (UPI) — Congress has been asked to help take death out of the air we breathe.

A steady stream of witnesses have made the pilgrimage to Capitol Hill to plead for federal action to curb air pollution, the unwanted child of a prospering economy.

The most alarmed point to smog-plagued Los Angeles, or to London in 1952 when 2,000 persons died from polluted air.

Others admit there is a problem, but say it is not yet a menace and could be ended by a not-too-expensive appropriation from Congress.

Local Level Problem
Still others say there is no need for congressional legislation — that pollution can be stopped on the local level.

In Congress, the House already has passed a cleaner air bill. The Senate still is to decide but the consensus is that there will be no action at this session.

Out of the wealth of testimony presented to Congress, two things are certain — pollution does exist in some degree all over the nation, but it can be remedied, and has been in some places.

In Pittsburgh, the street lights burn only at night now. The reason: the city moved to curb the blanket of soot that once hung over the steel-making center.

Air Is Filtered
In Chicago, the average householder's cleaning bills have been cut by \$41 a year because offi-

cialists moved to filter the air. These two industrial cities have been leaders in the fight to abolish "sewers in the sky."

Pittsburgh Mayor Joseph Barr says "Our efforts initially were aimed at restricting the use of coal which produced heavy smoke. Thousands of homeowners changed from coal to natural gas for home heating. Diesel locomotives replaced nearly 1,000 steam engines in use around the city." Cooperation among the citizens produced the solution, he said.

Different cities have different problems because of variances in climates and fuels.

Automobile Exhaust
In Los Angeles, the main problem is automobile exhaust. In London, it's coal smoke. In New York City, it is ash and smoke from burning garbage and from oil refineries across the Hudson river in New Jersey.

Elsewhere, it is smoke and dust and smells from steel mills, cement works, power plants, smelters, oil refineries, paper mills and chemical plants.

Industrial air pollution can be reduced significantly by obtaining the right kind of device.

For example, an electrostatic precipitator mounted in a factory chimney picks the soot and fly-ash out of the smoke. It works by electromagnetic attraction in the same way a glass rod rubbed with silk picks up bits of paper.

Problem of Devices
Other devices mix the escaping gases with water in a whirling cyclone, run them through filter bags like those of a vac-

uum cleaner, or expose them to chemicals which capture the vapors. The problem with all of them is that they cost money — lots of money.

A catalytic cracking unit in an oil refinery may cost \$7 million. Smog control equipment for it costs \$3 million. An open-hearth furnace in a steel plant may cost \$200,000. A smoke control device attached to it costs another \$150,000. The little dry cleaning shop on the corner may need a carbon filter. And that costs about \$3,000.

Aside from the obvious nuisance value of dirty air, there is considerable controversy as to how much health is adversely affected from pollution.

Classic Examples Cited
The classic examples which are cited to show the danger of pollution to health occurred in Donora, Pa., in October, 1948, where one-third of the population of 14,000 became ill and 17 died from chemical air pollution.

In December, 1953, New York City was pinned under an "inversion" that trapped filthy waste between layers of air — making the air unfit — even lethal — for human lungs. The week-long smog was blamed for more than 200 deaths.

London has different problems with a "pea soup" fog, which rolls in frequently, and only last December claimed 340 lives.

Following this disaster, the British passed a clean air act designed to reduce pollution. Improved coal burning practices required by that act have reduced the amount of particle matter in the air.

The National Tuberculosis as-

sociation, which keeps close tabs on the environmental effects to health, says, "Air pollution and its effects on health, while not precisely definable at present, are probably significant over the course of years."

Putting the Donora and Lon-

don fogs disasters in perspective, the association said:

"It is easy enough to recognize the threat of air pollution when an acute local episode such as these incidents reach the headlines."

"But, in all probability, the

very people who were felled in these disasters were those who had already become chronically disabled by respiratory disease.

One certainly wonders if the day-to-day exposure to the same air pollution at lower levels over periods of years might not have been just as important as the dramatic episode that took their lives."

Testifies at Hearing
Sen. Abraham Ribicoff, D-Conn., sponsor of a bill to put the federal government dominantly in the research field to obtain clean air, testified in congressional hearings on the health aspects.

"Leading scientists feel that air pollution may have a good deal to do with aggravating heart conditions and increasing susceptibility to such respiratory diseases as asthma and bronchitis," Ribicoff said. But nobody knows for sure.

So who is to blame and what can be done about it?

Industries certainly come out as the prime villains, but they have tried to cooperate, prodded by local ordinances and civic pride.

Their standard objections to pollution control equipment has been cost — "You'll drive jobs out of town," or "It will price our product out of the market."

Willing To Clean Up
Actually, in many cities, a company has shown to be quite willing to be compelled to clean up, provided its competitors are forced to go to the same expense.

The states have helped some. Figures from the Senate Public

Works committee show that one-third of the states have established programs to deal with pollution, but most of these are limited in scope.

Local government programs, where they exist, are generally understaffed and without sufficient financial means to act effectively.

Only 34 local programs across the nation have annual budgets exceeding \$25,000 and seven of these are in California. Of the other 51 local air pollution control agencies, 21 try to function on less than \$10,000 a year.

In the past decade, despite a 30 per cent increase in urban population, there has been, outside of California, no overall increase in manpower to combat air pollution at the local level.

Major Pollution Problems
It has been estimated that in 1961, major air pollution problems existed in 308 urban places. This represents an increase of 84 in a decade, the committee said.

About 7,300 places, housing 60 per cent of the population, are confronted with air pollution of one kind or another, the committee concluded.

The federal government did not enter the clean air fight to any degree until 1955 when it passed a law authorizing the Public Health Service to study control.

This was followed up in 1960 by a law directing the surgeon general to study the problem of motor vehicle exhausts and their effect on human health. This has resulted in filters called "blowbys" being required in

several states. They fit on car exhaust pipes.

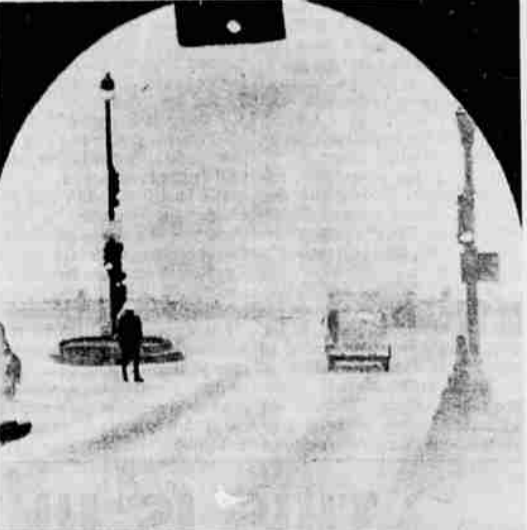
"Smog" Alert System
Only this month, a "smog" alert system was put into operation by the Public Health Service and the U. S. Weather Bureau.

It is considered unlikely that Congress will take final action this session, but Sen. Edmund S. Muskie, D-Maine, has conducted public hearings this summer on what the federal government should do in the field.

The House has passed a bill, sponsored by Rep. Kenneth A. Roberts, D-Ala., which provides \$5 million in grants to be made for research each year with a four-year limitation.

Ribicoff's bill would provide federal grants totaling \$74 million to study air pollution cause and effects over a 10-year period.

The Kennedy administration is known to back the bills, but favors providing an unlimited time for research with Congress making annual, unspecified appropriations.



DIFFERENCE IS SHOWN—Congress has been asked to help take death out of the air. Pittsburgh, Pa., has done a great deal to decrease smog, as these "before" (top) and "after" (bottom) pictures show. The view is toward downtown Pittsburgh from Liberty Tubes before smoke control and after in April, 1951. (UPI)

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State Education Board Will Meet

SALEM—Proposed rules governing distribution of the Basic School Support fund for pupils enrolled in non-public schools who attend public schools on a part time basis will be considered by the State Board of Education at the meeting Tuesday, Oct. 22, in Salem.

The rules indicate that these pupils may be included by the public school district in claims for Basic School Support Fund aid.

Total days membership for such pupils would be determined by totaling the number of hours of public school instruction which was provided in the regular session for all of the non-public school pupils and dividing by six.

Average daily membership would equal the total days membership as computed and divided by the number of days actually taught during the regular session in the public schools where they attended.

School district reorganization and possible boundaries for a proposed Mid Columbia Area Education District also will be among other matters to be brought before the board.

PORTLAND (UPI) — Bruce Kelly announced his resignation Thursday as conductor of the nationally-known Forest Grove Gleemen and Girls.

Grading Completed On 13-Mile Section Of Mountain Road

Grading on a 13-mile section of the Lake of the Woods highway has been completed and approximately 96 per cent of the sub-base surfacing has been done, according to F. L. Somers, project contractor.

The project, under construction for the past three years, is a bureau of public roads contract. It is part of the Winnemucca-to-the-Sea route.

Somers said that with the completion of sub-base surfacing in about two weeks a bituminous surfacing will be placed.

An additional five-mile section also is under construction to the west of the Somers project. This section joins the present highway east of Brownsboro which is paved to the boundary of the Rogue River National forest.

Being Reconstructed
The latter project, in the vicinity of McAllister Soda Springs, is being reconstructed due to slides in the area. Contractor is Thomas J. Parker and Associates Inc., Ashland.

While the highway is passable, heavy construction with some one-way traffic, will be encountered, particularly in the western end of the projects, it was noted. Except for the 18-

Association Will Carry Out Project Differently in '63

Jackson County Mental Health association will carry out its annual Christmas gift project in a different manner this year because of the reorganization of the State Hospital into geographic units, spokesmen for the association have announced.

Jackson county is now in Unit VI, which also includes Josephine, Douglas, Coos and Curry counties. It is estimated that this area will have about 200 hospitalized patients this year for whom the Jackson county association wishes to provide gifts.

Gifts for the approximately 300 persons will be solicited from business, church groups and other organizations.

Chairman of Project
Mrs. Herbert Gifford is chairman of the local committee and will direct the program. Officers of the association are the Rev. Fred Evans, president; Mrs. Phyllis Pesenti, vice president; Mrs. Bruno Rath, secretary; and Mrs. Chester Guches, treasurer.

Mrs. Robert Minear, assisted by Mrs. Una B. Inch will serve as liaison person for the hospital project and for the Fairview Home, two separate projects.

Mrs. Cathryn Springer, director of social services for the State Hospital at Salem, wrote, in urging early action on the project, "Christmas in October? No. It is just that now is the time to begin planning for the Christmas gifts project for our patients. One of the richest benefits our patients have is the service provided by the people of the community to make life more meaningful here."

Budget Restrictions
"Budget restrictions and lack of trained personnel means that only with your contributions will it be possible to provide for all our patients, especially those without family or funds who would otherwise be forgotten."

During October and November the committees in charge of the project will ask members to help in getting to individuals and groups specific information about the project.

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