

Mid-Western Gas Shortage Caused Primarily By Lack Of Transport Facilities

By HARRIS ELLSWORTH
Congressman, Oregon Fourth District
My committee has been holding hearings for the purpose of determining the true nature of the gasoline and petroleum supply situation in the United States. The hearings were deemed necessary because of the reports and rumors of an impending gasoline famine, with some talk of the resumption of rationing. We sought the facts, and, I believe, obtained them. The committee will issue a formal report, but I think I can sum up the situation as stated by the numerous authorities who appeared before us. Shortages this year which will be felt mostly in the Middle West are caused not by a shortage of oil, but by a shortage in equipment, meaning a shortage of steel. The committee plans to make inquiry into the steel situation next to ascertain why steel is in short supply for the production of oil distributing equipment.

The demand for petroleum products has increased amazingly since the end of the war, and is now greater than the peak of demand during the war years. Mr. Eugene Holman, president of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, told us that, during the current year, the industry is supplying oil and products at a rate of 31%—nearly one-third—above the rate at which oil products were supplied in 1941, the last peace time year. The total estimated demand for 1947 is 5,733,000 barrels per day. This is double the consumption of twelve years ago.

Increase In Trucks
The increase in demand results from the increase of large motor trucks and especially Diesel trucks—also in the increased mechanization of farm equipment. The most startling increase, however, is in the use of oil burners for home heating. In 1946, 450,000 new oil burner units were installed. By the end of 1947, it is estimated 3 1/2 million oil burner units will be in use. The startling fact about this figure is that it represents a total of 50% more oil burners than were in use when the war ended.

Contrary to some irresponsible statements I have seen to the effect that we are short of oil because we are shipping too much overseas, the fact is that, for the first time since 1923, we are importing more oil than we are exporting, and our exports this year are 31.9% less than they were in 1928.

Production figures are at an all-time high. Production from all sources plus imports are slightly in excess of total demand, including exports. Industry witnesses testified that reserves are adequate, that refinery equipment is being increased and that plans for much greater producing capacity, which will more than keep pace with increasing demand, are being carried out. Here is a paragraph from Mr. Holman's statement which sums up the situation in a few words:

"I would like to repeat what others before me have said—that the problem of meeting demand over the next year or eighteen months is not due to shortage of basic raw material. Our supply of crude oil today is at a record level—the highest in our history. The lack is one purely of equipment and facilities to get products to the consumer, who is using oil as never before. There is an ample store of oil underground—our proved reserves—for today's needs. But we face problems caused by material shortage in many phases of the industry—drilling of wells, transporting crude to refineries, and delivering finished products to the service station and the home."

The tax reduction bill was again passed by the house of representa-

tives, this time by a vote far greater than enough to override a presidential veto—302 to 112. The bill is the same bill recently vetoed by the president, with the exception that the effective date is January 1, 1948, instead of July 1, 1947.

In previous letters, I have discussed this tax bill at some length. Government income and expense figures indicate that a very substantial payment can be made on the national debt and the budget balanced after this reduction is made. There has been a great opposition here and cry that this tax bill does not benefit the small taxpayer. The truth is the bill provides a flat reduction of 39%—nearly one-third—to all small taxpayers, and I think anyone will agree that is a good strong cut in taxes.

Adjournment is still scheduled for July 26th, but as I study the calendar of legislation still to be handled, I doubt that the session can end so soon.

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National Forest Receipts Show Total Of \$6 Million

Receipts of over six and a half million dollars for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1947, for the use of national forest products from the nineteen national forests of the North Pacific region of Oregon and Washington, have just been reported by the U. S. Forest Service, Portland, Oregon. Covering sale of national forest service and other forest products, grazing fees, land uses, and water power, the total net received for the fiscal year is \$6,375,387.93. This is a substantial increase over the receipts for fiscal year 1946, which amounted to \$3,799,961.34.

Stressing the increasing use of national forest timber is the fact that most of the total came from timber sales, amounting to \$6,300,926.57. Leading the 19 national forests in volume of business is the Mount

Baker, in Northern Washington, with receipts of \$783,507.85. The Columbia, in Southern Washington, is second, with \$680,628.42; while the Willamette, in Western Oregon, is third reporting \$660,259.75. The Olympic in Northwestern Washington, which held first place in 1946, dropped to fourth in 1947, total \$533,935.66.

Twenty-five per cent of all national forest receipts are returned to the state, for distribution to counties for roads and schools, and an additional 10 per cent is made available for forest roads, says the forest service.

The French city of Dunkerque has been under English, Austrian and Spanish rule at various times in its history.

Department Probe Asked

WASHINGTON, July 17 (AP)—Senator Kem (R-Mo.) asked the senate today to investigate the justice department's handling of a 1946 Kansas City election probe, declaring that Attorney General Tom Clark

had tried to "whitewash the whole incident."

He called up his motion to discharge the judiciary committee, which voted Monday to postpone action indefinitely on Kem's resolution which would call for such an inquiry by the senate.

"No believer in good government or fair play will want any part in whitewashing a whitewash," he declared.

His demand grew out of the justice department's investigation into

alleged irregularities in the Kansas City democratic primary in which former Rep. Roger Slaughter was defeated by Enos Axtell, who was endorsed by President Truman. Axtell lost the general election race to Rep. Reeves (R.Mo.).

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