

Energy crisis

[Continued from Page 1] especially concerning the manufacture of fertilizer, he would not commit himself. He said the PUC has

hearings regularly to rearrange priorities on natural gas needs, and that agriculture would be given

consideration as the need arises.

The tone of the meeting was dismal as one official after another drove home the fact that the country is in a real crisis situation. Speakers also made it clear that a few days of pleasant weather will not put an end to the problem.

Bloom, speaking for the PUC, said, "The problem won't go away after today." He predicted that in the 1980's "we will be back with electricity and the same problems."

Bloom said he doesn't believe conservation will solve the problem. He said,

"We must provide the economic incentive for these industries to solve the problems, and that means profit. We must pay for what we get." He said further that he was not for "deregulation" of natural gas, but for "enlightened" regulation. He called the situation desperate.

Joseph LaSala, Philadelphia area administrator for the Federal Energy Administration, said the country is "in a period of resource shortage." He said, "Things are measurably worse now than they were three years ago during the Arab oil embargo. The impact of natural gas on our lives in the last six weeks is worse than the oil embargo. Production is in a state of dramatic decline and consumption is up. We must get at natural resources."

LaSala says there is a real need for conservation, to treat our resources with care. He foresees a mandatory conservation act, because "voluntary efforts won't work. They didn't with the oil embargo."

Speaking for the governor's Energy Council, William Harral said, "The crisis will not be done and gone with. Although this severe winter precipitated the crisis, it will be with us for several years to come." He explained Governor Shapp's proposal to revitalize the coal industry, as well as to embark quite heavily on extreme conservation in the state government.

William Howard, a West Virginia spokesman for the Columbia Gas Transmission Company blamed the crisis on apathy on nearly every level of government. He said, "The keystone of solving the future energy problem is through the use of coal." He said gas-fired electric power generating stations must be converted because "we can't waste the gas."

He called for strict mandatory conservation measures, but he said the biggest difficulty will be the constant battle with "would-be environmentalists." He said environmental considerations cost a lot of time and money.

Columbia Gas spokesmen were very pessimistic about the possibility of getting more natural gas for industry before April 1, even though arrangements are continuing to contract for gas from the west coast. And unless emergency purchases can be made, some cutoffs could continue into summer



Congressman Bob Walker

so that reserves can be built up for next winter.

Several electric utility spokesmen concurred that there is no escape from the very serious problem. Many said they had foreseen the problem and had tried to warn of the potential crisis.

According to Congressman Walker, up until now Congress has not given energy proposals any priority, and have been

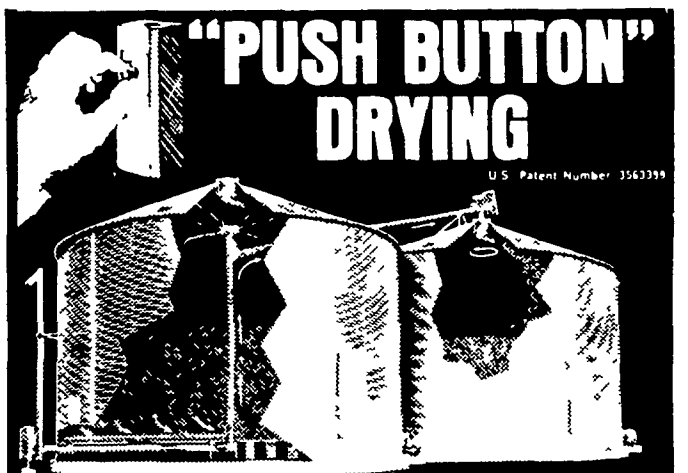
unwilling to accept solutions which might be politically unpopular.

Speakers at the meeting seemed to agree that Congress must act now and act quickly and firmly to start to correct what are long-range energy problems.

But it was made quite clear that even though we may get through this winter, there will be many cold winters in the future.

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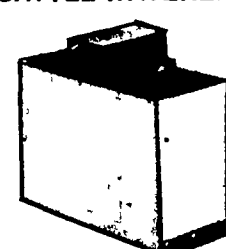
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