

through 11 other states, including New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. This disruption of fertilizer production is calculated to drive prices sky-high on a scale comparable to last year's oil hoax, which raised fertilizer prices by 80 per cent. Last year's price robbery directly reduced fertilizer usage by 10 per cent. This time many farmers wonder whether they can afford to buy any at all.

Rockefeller's hand in this affair is unmistakable since natural gas production and distribution is owned lock, stock, and barrel by Rockefeller interests. Over 60 per cent of natural gas production is concentrated in the hands of Exxon, their Rockefeller companies, and the rest of the Seven Sisters in the oil cartel. Chase Manhattan, Morgan Guaranty Trust, and First National City Bank between them control practically every major utility and gas pipeline company through interlocking directorates.

The just-released Federal Power Commission report alleging that natural gas is "a resource being pushed toward exhaustion" is a patent lie. According to the oil and gas industry itself, there are proven reserves in the ground sufficient for 12 years more of consumption at the current rate, 22 trillion cubic feet per year, or about 250 trillion cubic feet in areas with wells already drilled and in use. Estimated reserves in addition, including Alaska, bring this figure to 2,300 trillion cubic feet, which have not been drilled.

Abundant reserves are also available in Canada, simply waiting for a continental working class strike force to free production from Rockefeller control and tap them for a massive industrial expansion.

#### EPA COVERS FOR COLLAPSE OF TRACTOR PRODUCTION

Jan. 4 (IPS)--Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rulings were used this week as the pretext for the partial closing of the U.S. Steel plant in Gary, Ind. and layoffs at Wisconsin Steel in Chicago, both key suppliers of the agricultural implement industry. The steel layoffs are part of an emerging pattern of deliberate sabotage of existing tractor manufacture essential to maintaining food production. The three major tractor producers, International Harvester, Deere, and Caterpillar, are all de-emphasizing farm equipment and reorienting production to heavy construction and earth-moving equipment tied to the still doubtful Rockefeller slave-labor development projects.

Workers in the Quad Cities area on the Illinois-Iowa border report that layoffs have already begun at International Harvester due to the partial closing of Gary Steelworks, the only producer of a special alloy used in the rear assembly of tractors. Inter-

national Harvester announced ominously that it will stay in operation on a "day-to-day basis." Wisconsin Steel, a wholly-owned subsidiary of International Harvester, supplies practically all the steel to International Harvester's Pullman works in Chicago, their main tractor parts producer.

#### Pollution Cover

The coincidence of the EPA decisions affecting two, tractor-related steel plants indicates that this is merely a cover story needed to justify the phase-out of this crucial sector of production. In each case, the steel layoffs appear to have come as the result of long-pending EPA suits. Gary Steelworks has been threatened with the shutdown of its open hearth operations for years. The EPA has admitted it would be far less expensive for U.S. Steel to pay the fines and keep production going than to pay the heavy unemployment compensation resulting from layoffs, implying there is indeed "some other yet unknown reason" for closing the plant's open hearth furnaces. Wisconsin Steel has slid by the EPA before, acquiring an extension in July 1974.

The EPA decision affecting the Gary Steelworks immediately threatens the jobs of 2,500 steelworkers, another 1,500 in related industry, and 2,050 at International Harvester plants in the Quad Cities. The extent and impact of the Wisconsin Steel layoffs has not yet been determined.

In a related development, workers at the Fafnir Corp. in New Britain, Conn., one of the major producers of ball bearings for agricultural equipment, report they are working a shortened workweek.

A month ago, International Harvester, Deere, and Caterpillar reported a booming business in construction, industrial, and earth-moving equipment geared toward production for the now-threatened slave-labor development projects. For example, International Harvester arranged a \$50 million deal to produce 2,000 heavy-duty truck-tractors for the Iran Ministry of Roads. International Harvester reported its heavy construction equipment business was "solid, with a good strong demand." The construction equipment is used in developing open pit coal mines, pipelines, and other energy resources.

Deere, whose export sales increased last year to 20 per cent of total business, is planning a \$450 million expansion program and new plant construction, allowing it to increase its industrial and construction equipment capacity. Even this production, however, is jeopardized by the cabal's failure to get large-scale development projects off the ground.

Farmers throughout the continent increasingly report difficulties in obtaining the necessary farm equipment and tractor parts. In Indiana, there is heavy speculation in used tractor

parts because of the difficulty of finding new equipment, and repair is made impossible without parts. In Alberta, Canada farmers report that tractor prices have risen dramatically because of the shortage.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's recent report on Agricultural Finance shows a devastating fall in the amount of credit made available in 1974 by farm machinery manufacturers to retailers for loans to farmers. Loans supplied dropped from \$1.3 billion in 1972 to only \$881 million in 1974 despite the 20 per cent rise in tractor prices.

#### TRACTORS NEEDED TO STOP ECOLOGICAL HOLOCAUST

Jan. 5 (IPS)--At its historic year-end conference Dec. 28 and 29, the U.S. Labor Party embarked on an international campaign to massively expand food production and create new jobs by reconverting idled auto capacity to tractor production, increasing fertilizer production, and a crash program to develop nuclear fusion power.

The initiation of this massive program of expanding tractor, truck, and agricultural implement production through conversion of idle auto industry plant and through the construction of additional new plants is not by any means a "make-work" solution to the problem of mass unemployment. On the contrary, the working class must move immediately to mechanize agriculture if mass starvation and an ensuing ecological holocaust of epidemics and death are to be avoided.

In expanding food production to meet the already critical needs of both the starving millions of the Third World, especially in Sahelian Africa and the Indian subcontinent, and the need for increased nutritional levels in the advanced countries, we must focus on those means which will most rapidly expand food production globally, and then supply the food to those areas in greatest immediate need. In this way, we will gain time to implement more complete expansion in areas where greater inputs are needed. The key to this whole process is the increasing of yields through mechanization of agriculture, including the expansion of fertilizer production and the rapid increase of land area under cultivation.

#### Tractors for Advanced Sector

The areas which can most immediately contribute to expansion of food production lie in the already developed countries, whose farmers are best educated and most ready to handle mechanized agricultural technology. Advanced sector economies also have the general infrastructure capable of supporting such technology. On this basis, the major areas in need of immediate tractor inputs are the United States and Canada, Southern and Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Australia. Northwest Europe and Japan,