

ENERGY

Effects of the Energy Crisis in the U.S.A.

The following is a partial report on the effects of the Carter energy crisis in key states as of Jan. 29 as compiled by NSIPS offices around the Eastern half of the country. Since at this moment, the number of workers, schoolchildren, and households affected by natural gas shortages and the number of forced closings of plants, schools, and places of business is being deliberately exaggerated in the press to foster a crisis atmosphere, such figures will not be reported here.

States of Emergency

Ohio — Gov. James Rhodes declared a state of energy crisis two days ago, as natural gas suppliers announced plans to curtail their shipments to the state by an additional 18 per cent (they are already curtailed by more than 28 per cent). It is reported that most industrial and commercial users will be cut off from gas supplies by early next week if the cold weather continues. With tens of thousands already out of work because of the shortages, rumors are now circulating of mass layoffs. The emergency powers assumed by Rhoades, a Republican, under an act passed in 1975 give him the authority to mobilize the national guard, the state police, etc. for energy-related emergency work, to order the closing of schools and other municipal functions, to order industry shut, and if the emergency becomes "extreme," to suspend certain energy-use environmental restrictions. At this moment, the Governor is resisting pressure from Carterite Democrats and Rockefeller-linked Republicans to take rash emergency measures. Yesterday, he ordered all state offices closed at noon and requested that the state schools do likewise; most schools were already shut. He placed the national guard on alert and ordered some 250 onto active duty to assist in snow removal and disaster relief to snowbound areas. The governor then suspended Environmental Protection Agency restrictions against the burning of high sulfur fuels by power plants.

The Republican leadership of the state legislature will introduce legislation next week to give Rhoades wider emergency power to allocate gas supplies. The Governor's office, however, told NSIPS that he does not want such power and would veto the bill if it passed. The Governor's aides also cautioned the press against believing pronouncements emanating from the state Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA): "Ryan (the ERDA head — ed.) is always trying to put words in the Governor's mouth."

Indiana — Gov. Bowen has declared a state of energy emergency and has mobilized the national guard. Seventy-one armories have been opened throughout the state to act as shelters, while guardsmen are bringing in

supplies to snowbound areas. The major gas supplier for the northern part of the state has ordered 35,000 industrial and commercial customers to close down. In the downstate area, gas has been cut to 155 industrial users in the Indianapolis area, stopping all production until at least Monday. White County is reported to have declared martial law, but local officials denied that it was declared, only that it was in effect. Only government and official vehicles are allowed on the roads; civil defense teams are fully mobilized. All schools were shut yesterday pending further decisions over the weekend.

Bowen, like Rhoades is also resisting pressure to take drastic measures. He has lifted EPA bans on high sulfur fuels and has suspended regulations barring fuel and coal trucks from carrying overweight loads. The Governor along with Mayor Hudnut of Indianapolis went on TV last night to call for energy conservation, but announced no new measures. He instead asked people to stay at home to avoid the cold and to double up with neighbors to conserve fuel.

The press is now filled with stories of possible residential cutoffs, while telling people that the only thing that will ease the crisis is a break in the weather. Last night's blizzard has blocked all interstate highways north of Indianapolis. The average temperature in the state remains below zero.

Pennsylvania and New Jersey — These states, run by Rockefeller-controlled Governors, represent the most advanced statewide crisis management situations and are thus the leading edge of the nationwide crisis management drive for an energy dictatorship.

Gov. Milton Schapp declared a state of emergency in Pennsylvania last week. The national guard was immediately placed on a low-level mobilization. It has since been deployed into local areas for "disaster relief." The press is circulating reports that the guard will be deployed sometime next week to begin evacuations of people from areas serviced by gas transmission trunk lines. These lines, the reports state, will have to be turned off to maintain pumping pressure in the main lines. All media report scare stories about residential cutoffs impending, while month-long mass layoffs are said to be "very likely." Special civil defense units have been mobilized to handle emergencies created by yesterday's storm and the continuing gas crisis. Restrictions on burning high sulphur fuels have been waived.

Some gas suppliers are reported to be close to exhausting their total supplies. Pittsburgh radio reports that home heating suppliers have run out for residents in some counties around the city and that fuel companies have demanded cash payments for their products. Philadelphia Mayor Rizzo, who has fought against efforts to close down his city, yesterday was forced to

declare a state of emergency. He ordered all commercial and industrial establishments to close for three days with the exception of food markets, pharmacies, and service stations. Rizzo will decide on Monday whether to rescind the order.

In New Jersey, Gov. Brendan Byrne has also mobilized the national guard and all civil defense units. The latter have been augmented by staff from public utilities to form "heat patrols" going house to house in some areas checking for compliance with Byrne's orders to turn down thermostats. Rumors are also circulating here that the guard will be called on for evacuations from areas whose gas supplies will be cut next week. The media are reporting that "all of the state's industry will shut down soon" unless the weather substantially improves. New Jersey's gas supplies have been curtailed by 45 per cent.

New York — Gov. Hugh Carey declared a state of emergency two days ago and put the national guard on alert. They have since been mobilized for snow removal, primarily in the western area of the state. The Buffalo area was devastated by last night's snowstorm. According to eyewitness reports, nothing is moving in or around the city. Thousands of people are stranded in buildings and in cars, with the Red Cross distributing disaster food supplies.

The press is using these actual disaster conditions to terrorize the rest of the state. New York area press reports that residential gas cutoffs could occur next week, while many plants in the metropolitan New York area will be forced to shut Monday. Carey has ordered all schools heated by natural gas shut indefinitely. He is reported to be considering assuming wider powers under already passed state energy crisis legislation to force allocation of gas. He has already ordered thermostats turned down by 8 per cent and has mobilized CD units.

West Virginia — Less than two days after his inauguration, Gov. Jay Rockefeller announced a state of "acute energy emergency," mobilized the national guard, and declared that this will be "the worst energy crisis in history." NSIPS has been unable to indicate exactly what powers the young Rockefeller has under his "acute energy emergency." The Governor had announced plans to relocate people from "affected areas," using the national guard, but it is unclear whether any such evacuations have taken place. A combination of natural gas shortages, cold weather, and snow has reportedly closed down most activity in large areas of the state; the media have been whipping the population into a panic. Yesterday the radio reported the approach of a killer snowstorm, "the most dangerous storm of your lifetime." As the word spread,

schoolchildren bolted from classrooms, workers reportedly ran from factories and traffic in several cities ground to a halt as panicky residents futilely attempted to escape. Rockefeller, who is reportedly operating from some kind of "command bunker" overseeing a "crisis staff," made a special broadcast on a CD radio band to urge calm and tell everyone to stay in their houses until further notice.

The states of *Virginia, Alabama* and *South Carolina* were reported today to have all declared states of emergency. Gov. Godwin of Virginia is said to be considering plans to allocate gas supplies from one portion of the state to another. Gov. George Wallace of Alabama is reported to have mobilized the national guard and is preparing to evacuate people from "cold parts of the state to warm areas."

Some Other Affected Areas

Maryland— Thus far, although Gov. Mandel has seen no reason to declare a state of emergency, the four major natural gas suppliers have requested that all users cut use to a minimum. The lack of emergency has by no means stopped the psywar against the state's population. Workers in the state's factories are being told to report to work each day without any assurance of whether they will be sent home. This is especially true in the Baltimore area, where GMAD workers are being told that there may not be any work next week because of a likely gas shutoff. Three thousand Baltimore restaurants were closed without warning yesterday by gas cutoffs — right after they had purchased their fresh food for the weekend. Fires caused by bursting gas lines continue to proliferate in the city. Baltimore Mayor Schaffer yesterday suddenly ordered the over-worked fire department to conduct a city wide fire drill. The Mayor had the radio stations announce several times that the citizens should "not be alarmed, this is only a drill."

North Carolina — Unlike South Carolina, there is no state of emergency in this state, nor any severe crisis. This may come as a shock to the readers of the *New York Times* and other northern newspapers which have reported mass layoffs in the state. While Governor Hunt's office admits that it does not have accurate figures on layoffs, NSIPS has confirmed that the *Times* reports are greatly exaggerated. Most plants that had gas cutoffs were able to continue operations by switching to other fuels. A key factor in limiting the effects of the crisis is that the state gets a good sized chunk of its power from nuclear plants.