

ENERGY

House rejects rationing

In a surprising but welcome turn of events occurring as this column goes to press, the House of Representatives has decisively rejected the emergency gas and fuel rationing powers bill drafted by Energy Secretary James Schlesinger and urgently sought by the Carter Administration. The vote, a crushing 246-149 against the bill, came despite intense Administration pressure, and a nationwide, carefully orchestrated scare campaign centered around the imposition of similar, "odd-even" rationing measures days earlier by California Governor Jerry Brown.

While the details of what led to the defeat have yet to emerge, it is clear that large portions of the U.S. electorate have not bought the contrived "gas shortage" scenario concocted in California—with the help and complicity of oil interests directly connected to Governor Brown, the sometime populist and companion of rock star Linda Ronstadt. And, it appears from tonight's House vote, some indication of the public mood has finally filtered up to Capitol Hill, where the measure cleared the Senate by a large margin only a day earlier.

At the same time, California Attorney General Duke Magian has announced that his office is looking into allegations that both the national and California spot gasoline shortages are an artificially created hoax. Coming on top of the House vote, this development could spell big trouble for

Brown, particularly if the inquiry begins looking into the Brown family's shady involvements in Indonesian oil.

The real story of the "gas shortage" is one of direct and corrupt policy collusion between Schlesinger, Brown, and selected oil companies—including Atlantic Richfield, who chairman delivers a weekly policy briefing to Brown—and Rand Corporation operatives, to create a mood of public hysteria conducive to passage of this week's scheduled vote on the gas rationing powers.

According to sources in California, the gasoline shortages there are a product of deliberate, media-aided manipulations by Brown, Schlesinger (a former Rand employee), and state officials also formerly connected with the Santa Monica Rand think tank.

In addition to greasing the way for this week's congressional votes, the shortage scare in California was aimed at conditioning the U.S. population for planned national gas emergencies and crisis rationing to be imposed by early summer.

Under the Brown administration, California is dominated by policymakers from the Aspen Institute—the British controlled think tank also closely linked to Atlantic Richfield—which was also deeply involved in bringing about the "Islamic Revolution" which has slashed Iran's oil production.

The "point man" for the op-

eration is Brown's State Energy Commission head Richard Mallin, who also worked for the Rand Corp. before becoming Brown's state energy czar. In justifying Brown's energy powers, he stated that their aim is to combat "the public." In fact, the potential for panic among Californians has been fueled in the past days by press reports, mostly citing figures from Mallin's office, that the state will be running out of gasoline by Memorial Day.

The basis for this manipulation is Schlesinger's artificial allocation shortfalls, provoked two months ago when the Energy Secretary "predicted" \$1.00 per gallon gasoline prices and then subsequently guaranteed this prophecy through government regulations forcing higher prices and less production of gasoline. In addition, company gas supply allocations are weighted to affect California most severely, as a state heavily dependent on automobile use. In actual fact, gasoline reserves in western states are now five percent greater than they were last year at this time. Any spot shortages in California are purely artificial.

A spokesman for the Southern California Service Stations told this news service that the Brown emergency scenario is a rerun of the 1973-74 test run, and is a deliberate fraud. "There is no possibility of the state being out of gas by Memorial Day," he stressed.

Despite tonight's congressional setback for Schlesinger's crisis management push, the outlook is for continuing efforts from that quarter to create a gas shortage, using the extraordinary powers Schlesinger wields as Secretary of Energy. Schlesinger this week declared that "there will be no serious energy conservation until gasoline reaches \$2.00-\$2.25 a gallon."

—William Engdahl