

Opinion

Will we make it?

An energy conference sponsored by four Kentucky utilities last week painted a gloomy picture of America's immediate future.

The most damning indictment delivered charged the American people with using too much energy now with the consequences, like the chickens, coming home to roost in a few years. Add to this the opinion delivered by several speakers that government regulations and environmental groups are tapping new reserves of oil and gas and are beginning to wonder just how far America is headed.

Most amazing of all is the fact that the forms of energy now being squandered have only been used extensively in the past 50 years. Our grandfathers were familiar with horsepower but not in the sense that it is spoken of today. The internal combustion generations have tied us into a knot that may be difficult, if not impossible, to untangle.

Another facet brought out at the meeting is that there are plenty of energy sources available but the price for them may be more than we can handle. Oil imports have risen more than double and the balance of payment deficit in this area has gone from 0 in 1973 to almost \$20 billion in 1977. This is money that is going out over and above what is coming in.

Where does the future lie? Will conservation do it or will rationing be necessary? The consequences are a frightening to behold when you stop to realize just how much America depends on oil and gasoline.

A lot of useful information was presented at the conference. And although one may say that the people who sponsored the meeting have a vested interest in producing more energy with less government restrictions the facts still show that none-

where down the line America is going to have a rude awakening.

In the weeks to come the Mercury is as likely as possible to let our readers know just what the energy picture is according to experts in that field. One of the remarks made at the conference was that the media failed to awaken the American people to the seriousness of the problem over the past decade.

Whether that is true or not the Mercury feels that this information, and the predictions, are important enough to spend the time it takes to present in a form that can be easily understood. The problem of enough energy to keep the country going is one that affects each and every one of us. It is probably the most important issue of the next 50 years and if it is not met sensibly then the America we have known since the end of World War II may be gone forever—and may not like what takes its place.

Carlie Moore, parliamentarian. — To Mr. and Mrs. Jack W. Bowen, a son, Joseph Burton, Oct. 18. — To Mr. and Mrs. Elva Clark, Erie, Mich., twins, a girl and a boy. This the fourth set of twins in the family. — To Mr. and Mrs. Carl Edmund, a daughter, Anna Elizabeth, Oct. 11.

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THURSDAY, October 27, 1978

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Miss Marjorie Hopkin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Hopkin of Carle, is depicted in the "Hamilton, Ohio" city of college students. She is a student at Transylvania.

Agree or not

Dubious contracts old hat in Kentucky's governments

by S. C. Van Curen

FRANKFORT—Recent revelations about state personal service contracts and purchase contracts for automobiles and other goods in the way they have been handled in the Finance Department and other state agencies.

However, it should be said that the present administration isn't the only one whose questionable practices have been used. It happened during the administration of Gov. Wendell Ford, and Gov. Leslie B. Nunn.

The most recent is the \$30,000 overpayment for trucks to a Central City Automobile firm. The deal was handled through Howard Woodall of Paducah, the administrator of the Finance Department at the time after it was revealed that an adjustment for a firm bid had been made by Ford Motor Company and the extra \$20,000 paid by the state amounted to a double payment of this amount.

A legislative subcommittee last week approved a contract with SIA, a Los Angeles consulting firm for \$200,000 after a cost overrun "cushion" of \$219,500 had been removed. Gov. Carroll said he didn't know about the contract when it was first revealed.

More personal service contracts have been issued by the Carroll administration than any of his predecessors. These contracts go principally to lawyers, doctors, accountants and other professions where bidding is frowned upon as a violation of professional ethics.

The \$219,500 cushion was explained by the Finance Department as a method to provide for unforeseen work that might develop during the term of the contract. It would prevent having to go through another contract procedure if more work were needed.

This causes the average citizen to wonder if the consulting firm he wouldn't have found some way to get the extra money back to the original contractor. The reviewing chairlift contract at Cumberland Falls was cancelled

after it was questioned. This happened during the Ford administration, and the state had to reimburse the contractor for his outlay costs in the beginning construction work. Ford said he didn't know anything about the contract and blamed it on the Parks Department at the time.

Such revelations as these are bound to raise the eyebrows of many thoughtful citizens across Kentucky and cause them to wonder how many other contracts and deals have been made that have not been inspected in detail. There is a certain amount of human error that has been made in all business and government but when some agencies

Kentucky Reflections

When did Dee change his mind?

by George Street Boone

The vote of Senator Walter (Dee) Huddleston against the proposed 30-month extension of the deadline for state legislators to act on the Equal Rights Amendment by ERA proponents has long been a source of controversy. After all, he was the Majority Leader in the Kentucky Senate in 1973 when the ERA was ratified during Wendell Ford's term as Governor. Huddleston's justification of his vote against extension was that support would be flying in the face of the 1976 Kentucky Legislature. This was not the case. Many women who have fought long and hard for equal protection under the law on this issue apparently remain supporters, even if with reduced enthusi-

asm. This may be true because their alternative, State Representative Leslie Guenther, is farther to the right than is Senator Huddleston. Continued support of Senator Huddleston by ERA proponents may also indicate that those candidates are more mature politically than some militants who have supported a proponent on a single issue. This type of single issue concern has made it increasingly difficult for senators and representatives who are confronted regularly by such diverse issues as whiskey at the time, gun control, abortion and the myriad concerns to which the human race is heir.

While political observers have become increasingly concerned about the impact posed by the single issue constituencies, a report by Don Mills, Editor of the Lexington Herald, on a preview of all Kentucky taken in August provides some enlightenment that a majority of voters still remain of one perspective. In a poll of 600 registered Kentucky voters, 60 percent indicated that they would support the Equal Rights Amendment. Fifty-two percent of those polled opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. The initial question on the poll was, "What are the three major problems facing the people of the United States today?" The Panama Canal issue did not rank on the list of greatest concerns.

A reassuring answer involved the response to a question of whether a senator should vote his conscience, only as an issue or vote with his constituents. Sixty-five percent of those polled said they should vote their conscience. Only 35 percent said he should vote the way his constituents desire. Nine percent had no opinion. This was reassuring from a group, the majority of whom differed with the Senator's position on the ERA. It recalls the state by Edmund Burke that a representative who simply votes the way his constituents desire them to fall range of his talents. It he dutifully voted their

Memory Lane

Hughes wins burley ribbon; 'Happy' says he's quitting

Thursday, October 25, 1968

The trophy donated by the Carlisle-Nicholas County Chamber of Commerce, the purple Rosette Ribbon, and \$25 first prize was won by Carl Hughes of Miranda in the second annual Nicholas County Tobacco Festival held Thursday, Oct. 11.

East Union 4-H Club officers recently elected are: Jimmy Hatton, president; Jimmy Boyd, vice president; Charlotte Ham, secretary; Bonnie Bromberg, reporter; Elizabeth Clay, song leader; and Judith Curtis, game leader. Miss Evelyn Brerley is the leader.

Eight officers of the Nicholas County FFA attended the annual fall district meeting at Denning High School in Mt. Olivet Oct. 18. Officers are: Faye Evans, Malinda Moore, Charley Kay Barton, Dorena Gaunce, Becky Gaunce, Jay Livingston, Janice Flora, and Carol Faye Tischer.

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Area winners

Nicholas County Homemakers inspect two local winning entries in the Burley Area Extension Homemakers' Association projects competition held in conjunction with the Burley Area meeting at Nicholas County Elementary School Monday, looking over Mrs. Grimes Caywood's work.

Tax assessor group heads calls for system changes

The president of Kentucky's Association of Property Valuation Administrators (PVA's) called for changes in the state's tax system during a recent meeting in Louisville.

One of those registered, Gaines said, should be taxing all real property at the time of registering. "If the charge) takes two, eight, or ten years."

"As PVA's we're requested to do a duty that's almost impossible," he said, referring to the administrator's statutory mandate to assess property at 100 percent of its current value in the face rampant inflation.

Those attending the conference seem-

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"However, if on the other hand, when you say whiskey, if you mean that old conversation, that philosophic wine and ale that is consumed when good fellows get together, that puts a song in their hearts, that soothes their nerves, and adds contentment to their eyes, Sir, if you mean that blessed ambrosia that eases the sorrows and the heartbreaks of this life, Sir, if you mean that medicinal spirit that puts a spring into an old man's step, if you mean that nectar of the gods, the sale of which has put millions into our treasury, I will tenderly care for the little orphan

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