DEFENSE DIGEST

Your roundup of mobilization news and trends affecting power men

Termination of DEPA (Defense Electric Power Administration) came on June 30 in wake of elimination of Controlled Materials Plan. Since its creation Dec. 4, 1950, this claimant agency for the electric-power industry guided and expedited an expansion program that added more than 14-million kw to the nation's facilities.

On Jan. 1, 1951, installed capability totaled about 67.5-million kw. By the beginning of 1953 this had grown to 81.5-million and is scheduled to go to 113.5-million by Jan. 1, 1956. If the current program keeps step, 9.5-million kw will be installed in 1953, 10.5-million in 1954 and 12-million in 1955.

End of nickel shortage seems in sight as result of a new contract for production expansion made by Defense Materials Procurement Agency. Beginning in Dec. 1953, International Nickel Co. of Canada, Ltd. will deliver metal from low-grade ore bodies in the Sudbury district of Ontario. This will add about 10% to normal U.S. supply, greatly ease severe shortage of nickel for alloys.

Private atomic-energy development will almost certainly get the nod from Congress, but maybe not until next year. Congress action is still awaited on Niagara Falls power and the St. Lawrence seaway project.

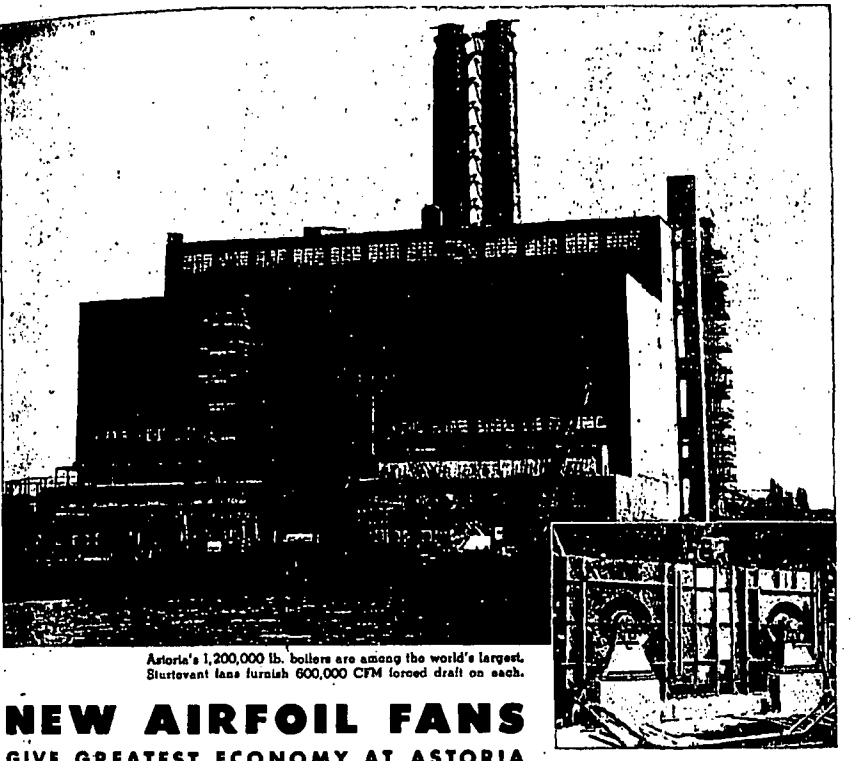
Federal government is pretty well out of the Niagara Falls picture but private development still faces opposition from New York's pressure for a state "monopoly." On the St. Lawrence, Federal Power Commission gave New York a preliminary go-ahead, recommends issuing a 50-yr license to the state to build and operate part of the $600-million power project, an element of the over-all seaway program so long under discussion.

Aluminum from Canada will bolster U.S. output in a big way as a result of Aluminium Ltd. contracts to supply over a million tons between now and 1959. This parent company of Aluminum Co. of Canada has been angling for years to secure long-term U.S. contracts — government or private. U.S. buyers are Aluminum Co. of America (600,000 tons), Kaiser Aluminum (186,000), and a number of independent fabricators (320,000). Alcan is now considering doubling output of huge new project at Kitimat, B. C., slated to come in next year with 90,000 tons capacity.

Mobilization agencies are being pruned and regrouped for two reasons: (1) With most of Korea buildup complete or under way, need for operating control agencies has largely disappeared. (2) Better organization is needed for peacetime planning and a fast shift into high gear in any future emergency.

Key of the reorganization is Office of Defense Mobilization, headed by Arthur S Flemming. As now planned, it will deal with virtually all mobilization phases: production and requirements, materials, financial policy, nonmilitary defense, manpower, economic stabilization. It will thus assume many functions of the former National Security Resources Board, Munitions Board, etc. Some operating functions in the mobilization field will still be formed out — a handful will stay on at National Production Authority (Commerce Dept), for example.

Big gain from necessarily complicated shuffling will be much greater centralization of industrial-mobilization authority for more coordinated and speedier action. New organization will lean heavily on advisory committees.



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