

# DEFENSE DIGEST



Your roundup of mobilization news and trends affecting power men

Northwest power limitation orders issued last October have been revoked by Defense Electric Power Administration. This move recognizes the end of crucial water-shortage conditions for the winter of 1952-53. In January, two provisions of the orders were suspended: a ban on use of interruptible power, and a 10% cut in use of firm power by large customers (over 8000 kwhr per week).

Successor to CMP is DMS, which is Washingtonese for Defense Materials System. New setup should take effect July 1, when Controlled Materials Plan expires.

Unlike CMP, under which steel, copper and aluminum were allocated to all users, DMS covers only defense uses. Allotments will be made to manufacturers and builders on direct Defense Dept. or Atomic Energy Commission contracts. These prime contractors will also get preference ratings to buy needed tools and components, compass priorities along to subcontractors and suppliers.

Producers of steel, copper and aluminum will set aside specific tonnages for defense-rated users. Probable industrywide set-asides for third quarter: steel 15%, copper 25%, aluminum 30%.

Defense-supporting projects will also receive priorities, but sparingly. AEC or the Pentagon will have to certify. An electric utility plant to power an atomic project, for example, would probably get a rating, others probably wouldn't. Non-rated manufacturers and builders can purchase steel, copper and aluminum in the open market, to the extent of their ability.

Molybdenum alloys for high-pressure high-temperature service are still restricted in molybdenum content, but allowable limits have been upped. For corrosion-erosion conditions, National Production Authority will consider exceptions.

Engineer shortage gets no better. Number of engineers needed in relation to production workers keeps rising as industry gets more complex: it now takes close to 200 engineers per 10,000 workers. This is up from about 115 in 1940.

And number of engineering graduates will decline to an estimated 17,000 in 1954, before starting to rise. Something over 25,000 graduates are expected in 1956. These figures compare with annual need for some 30,000 new engineers.

Plenty of copper seems to be the word as some favorable developments in supply put this once-tight metal into a buyers' market. There's been lots of confusion, but all signs now point to lower prices when the situation stabilizes.

Two reasons for better supply: Lifting price lid on foreign copper while European demand was down stimulated imports. The end of domestic price controls brought scrap out of hiding.

New mobilization strategy seems to be in the making, but it's still hard to tell what its final shape will be. We've been spreading defense work as far as possible to gear industry for a quick shift to big production if all-out war comes. This admittedly runs up costs; new defense boss Wilson thinks it wasteful.

His program might run like this: Cancel out some high-cost producers before their contracts are completed. Allow most contractors to go ahead and fill their orders. Restrict new contracts to efficient producers. This promises more arms per dollar spent but narrows the production "base."



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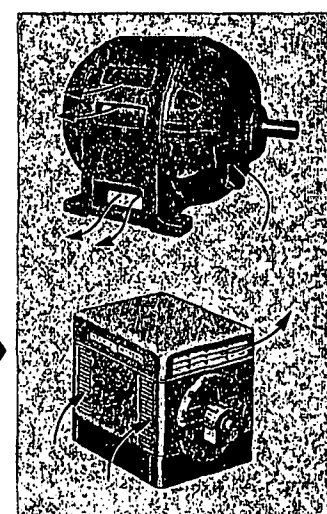
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