# DEFENSE DIGEST

***Your roundup of mobilization news and trends affecting power m***

**Tightness of power supply** seems likely to be with us for some time yet — not until 1956 can we expect any real improvement in reserve margins. Construction of new plants just hasn't kept pace with schedules. One big reason is delay in delivery of generating equipment, largely a result of materials shortages. Some of these stem from last year's steel strike, but a big and continuing factor is the priorities setup, which rates military and atomic-energy programs ahead of "defense-supporting" industries like power.

Atomic-energy expansion puts another crimp in the power program. Many large new AEC facilities need interim power service until their own generating equipment is operating. These loads will put heavy drains on widespread areas.

**Shrinking reserve margins** are predicted for both 1953 and 1954. This year looks to be much like 1952, but somewhat worse. Forecasts for 1954 indicate a peak-up of heavy demands just when the effect of delays is being felt most strongly. If this pessimistic view is right, the going in 1954 will be about as tough as it's ever been. Things may look up in 1955, and by 1956 we should be back on the beam, beginning to fatten up those thinning reserve margins.

**Better use of engineers** looks like the only immediate answer to the shortage that will continue for some years. A recent survey by the National Society of Professional Engineers shows many engineers doing work not requiring their specialized skills and training. But NSPE is encouraged because a good number of companies are studying how well their engineers are being utilized and looking for ways to use them most effectively. What are you doing?

**John L. Lewis got it.** — President Truman reversed his own stabilization authorities and approved the $1.90-per-day wage boost previously negotiated with the operators. With the market still soft and coal stocks still high, it's unlikely that the wage rise will make much immediate difference in prices. But it will undoubtedly make life tougher for some of the less efficient operators.

**Orderly removal of controls** is still getting a lot of study in mobilization agencies. Situation on most controlled materials looks promising, but dismantling the machinery too soon looks risky. Mobilizers seek to get a withdrawal procedure all worked out so they can take action quickly some time during the second quarter of 1953, if circumstances are favorable at that time.

**Fresh water from salt** is the object of a long-range research program being undertaken by the Dept. of the Interior. Nine outstanding leaders in science, education and industry have accepted invitations to advise the Department in its future studies. One of the nine is Sheppard T Powell, well-known consultant, familiar to POWER readers for his comprehensive articles on water treatment. While seawater conversion is the major object of the program, ways to treat brackish water will also be sought, with an eye to widespread irrigation needs.

**Power conservation** in the Pacific Northwest (DD, Dec 1952) will be guided by J H Gums as area representative of Defense Electric Power Administration. H A Lee will assist him. Both have long experience with Pacific Gas & Electric.




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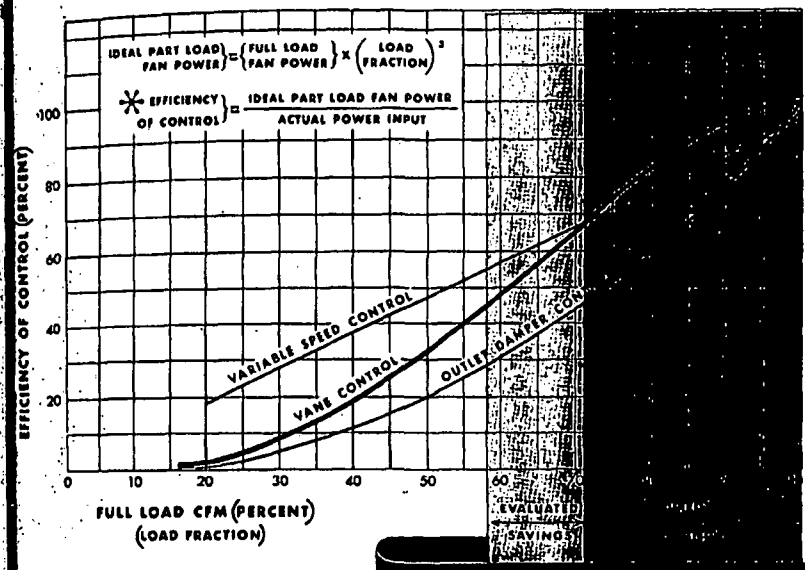


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