

That was the basis for my statement, but we have no assurance that the stock position will stay better for any length of time.

Mr. SMITH. You expect there will not be any shortage for heating purposes or for industrial operations in the coming fall and winter?

Major PARTEN. I do not have those inventory figures. I will say this, that it will be necessary for us to continue to use substitute movement into the Pacific Northwest, just as on the east coast.

Mr. ANGELL. Major Parten, I have had up with your office, and also with the Maritime Commission, the matter of the use of wood barges in the Pacific Northwest for oil transportation. What can you tell us about the status of that?

Major PARTEN. I will ask Mr. Eberle to answer that question.

Mr. EBERLE. We are already on record in favor of the use of wooden tank barges for the movement of grade E oil with a flash point of 150° F. or over. We think that is safe, not only from the standpoint of fire hazard, but from an operating hazard standpoint to carry the oil in those barges. When you get below that flash point, the danger of gases igniting, causing spontaneous explosions and fires is very considerable.

Mr. ANGELL. What are the oils that could be so carried?

Mr. EBERLE. Heavy oils for heating.

Mr. ANGELL. What I would like to know is, what is the present status, whether a temporary proposition still in the debating stage, or whether you have authorized the actual construction of the wood barges.

Mr. EBERLE. We have no authority to authorize the construction of barges. We can only approve, or recommend, which we have done.

Major PARTEN. We have recommended the construction of these barges. There are several private enterprises that are ready to undertake the construction of some wooden barges, and we are giving encouragement and help to those people to get that construction under way.

I understand that there is a bill which has passed the Senate and is pending in the House providing for the construction of wooden barges. That will go to the Maritime Commission. The Maritime Commission is in agreement with the policy of the office of the Petroleum Coordinator with reference to the use of wooden barges.

Mr. SMITH. Did you make any specific recommendation as to the number of barges required in that area?

Major PARTEN. No specific number. We do not recommend wooden barges now for the general transportation of petroleum and petroleum products, but we did recommend wooden barges only for the transportation of grade E oils, and we are in agreement in that recommendation with the other Government agencies.

We have been in collaboration and contact with them, and we have information from the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation that their regulation has been relaxed to permit the movement of grade E oil by wooden barges.

Mr. SMITH. Is it not your opinion that this is an urgent matter, and that the construction of these barges should not be delayed?

Major PARTEN. It is very urgent, and it is our purpose to push it in every way we can in order to get the construction promptly under way, and we have recommended it.