



Los Angeles County Air Pollution Control District

Confusion on the freeways matches confusion over the prospects.

AIR POLLUTION

## Many Angles on Dirty Air

Two years ago the White House hardly knew there was an all out war on air pollution and the Air Pollution Control Division of the U.S. Public Health Service was limping along with an arsenal of only \$16 million. Now, amidst pronouncements that we are losing ground in a campaign that was never really launched, President Johnson is laying the foundation for a massive—if not too costly—escalation of the battle against pollutants poured into the air by automobiles, incineration and industry.

The first move toward escalation came last week in Washington when 3,000 federal, state, local and industrial officials gathered to map out new strategy. "Control NOW—for clean air" was the theme of the three-day presidential conference convened by John W. Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

Vice President Humphrey called for a working partnership between all levels of government and private industry, but implied he thinks federal rule is the only road to success. Effective pollution control requires uniform standards from state to state and city to city, he said.

Secretary Gardner injected a sense of urgency, of life and death hanging in the balance. "People become sick and they die from breathing dirty air," he said, and unless we put a brake on air pollution, "air pollution will put a brake on progress."

**But it was apparent** that, if this were the opening skirmish, better plans still need to be laid.

None of the soldiers know for sure

what direction the course of war will take when, early next year, President Johnson attempts to convince Congress he is moving toward cleaner air, convince the states he is not encroaching on their local power and convince industry he is not riding rough-shod over their concern with the cost of pollution control technology.

**No one emerged** as the principal strategist, though there were as many proposals as there were interests, and the total will make an enormous compendium from which the President will pick and choose.

Sulfur oxides, found wherever coal and oil are burning, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons that react with sunlight to create photochemical smog, and fly ash, particulate matter emitted in gases from fuels, are the main pollutants under attack.

Glenn T. Seaborg, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, cited nuclear power instead of fossil fuels as a clean source of energy. None of the unused material from conversion is emitted into the air. All of it remains within the converter from which unused fuel and valuable radioisotopes can be extracted and then, the remainder is buried safely underground. Dr. Seaborg also suggested nuclear energy as the power source for an electric mass transportation system and for battery-powered cars.

Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, protector of the nation's natural resources, thinks fossil fuels will be the mainstay of the public's power demands at least until the 1980s and urged that all new industrial operations be located

well beyond urban boundaries. Some new plants are as far as 200 miles from the nearest city, he pointed out. How long these isolated areas will remain isolated, particularly with the arrival of a big business, is a moot point.

Federal Power Commission Chairman Lee C. White, with the protection of the price structure of the power industries in mind, cautioned gas advocates that gas cannot bear the burden of the pollution effort even though it does cause less pollution than fossil fuels.

And so it went. The bituminous coal industry pointed a finger at the oil and car industries when it called for stepped up efforts to find ways to filter out nitrogen oxide emissions. The people who make machines to catch fly ash reported they can work with upwards of 99 percent accuracy—with their most expensive equipment.

**Technology**, it seems, can either already do, or expect to do soon, most anything to curb pollution, but it will take lots of cash to do it. Tax incentives and national standards that put all industry in the same financial boat as far as pollution control equipment goes may spur private enterprise on to some kind of action. On the government side, the budget for fiscal 1967 is \$28 million, not even double what it was two years ago. PHS will use this money to increase training grants and health research studies and to test automobile emissions.

While air pollution faces poverty, an estimated \$3.4 billion will be pumped into eliminating water pollution by 1971.