

NATURAL RESOURCES

Free Flow of Iranian Oil

Free flow of Iran's oil to other parts of world conserves U. S. supplies and also builds up the industries of Marshall Plan countries.

► THE FREE flow of oil from Iran to Western Europe and to other parts of the world plays a part in American economy by conserving American supplies for domestic uses while at the same time building up the industries of the Marshall Plan nations to free them from further financial aid from the United States.

This is one of the reasons why a representative of the President of the United States is now in Iran in the hope of bringing about an understanding between the Iranian government and the British-owned oil company that developed and maintained oil-mining in that country. The main objective of immediate importance is to keep the oil flowing.

Iran is but one of six nations in the Middle East that is producing oil but it is the first in which oil production was developed commercially. The modern oil industry in the Middle East began in 1902 when a British company drilled its first well in western Iran, then Persia. Oil was found, but not in large quantities.

The British activities were then moved south into foothills 130 miles from the north end of the Persian Gulf. In 1908, a gusher was struck. Other wells followed. A pipeline was installed to carry the oil to one of the world's largest refineries from which products were loaded on tankers to travel by way of the Gulf to distant markets. Production last year average 663,700 barrels a day.

Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrein and Qatar are the six oil-producers of the Middle East, according to *The Lamp* (June), publication of the Standard Oil of New Jersey. This company, and other American companies, have contracts with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the British firm, for large quantities of crude for delivery over the next 20 years.

Iraq is second oldest among the six nations in oil production. This country, formerly known as Mesopotamia, in 1925 granted an oil concession to a group including British, Dutch and French interests. In 1928, several American oil companies, including the Standard Oil of New Jersey, joined the group. This was the first time American oil companies shared in a concession in the Middle East.

Iraq's great oil field is in northern part of the country close to the border of Iran. It is the famous Kirkuk field. Pipelines now carry oil from Iraq to the Mediterranean Sea. A 30-inch line under construction will bring carrying capacity of the pipelines up

to 610,000 barrels a day. At present, production is 136,200 barrels a day but larger quantities will be mined when the new pipeline is open.

Kuwait, Delaware-size nation between Iraq and the Persian Gulf, started oil production in 1938. Last year a daily average of 345,000 barrels was obtained, making it the third largest producing country in the Middle East. Production is by a British-American partnership.

Bahrein is a small Arab nation including 210 square miles of territory on islands off the Arabian shore in the Persian gulf. Oil production is by an American company and is about 30,200 barrels a day. But on one of the islands is a refinery of 160,000-barrels-a-day capacity that handles crude from the Saudi Arabian mainland.

Qatar is a nearby peninsula, worked by American interests, that produced 34,100 barrels a day during the past year.

Saudi Arabia, a country still known to many as just Arabia, is the second largest oil-producing nation of the Middle East, yielding 546,700 barrels a day during the past year. Oil concessions are owned jointly by four American oil companies, and the first commercial discovery of oil was made in 1938.

In December, 1950, a 30-inch pipeline connecting the oil fields on the western shore of the Gulf of Persia to the Mediterranean was completed. This pipeline, 1,068 miles in length, has a capacity of 300,000 barrels a day.

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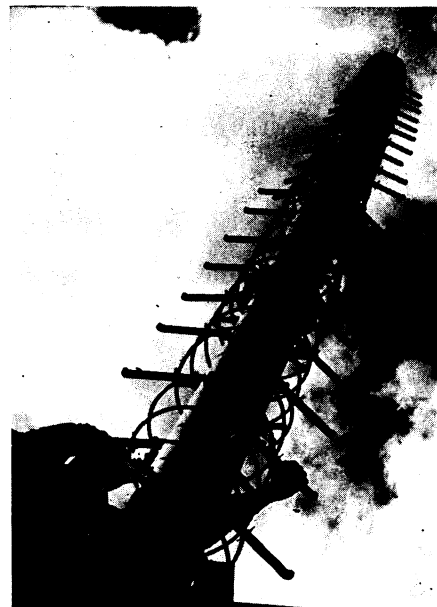
INVENTION

Patent Split Nail to Hold Building Materials

► HARD COVERINGS of slate, wood or other building materials are attached firmly to fibrous wallboard with a nail which has spreading points on which patent 2,560,643 was issued to Robert Lay Hallock, Larchmont, N. Y. Patent rights are assigned to Elastic Stop Nut Corporation of America, Union Township, N. J.

This split nail, made of a malleable metal, is so shaped that, when driven into a material, the sharpened ends cause the prongs to spread and make a firm hold. These nails are claimed to be especially effective in holding slate or asbestos shingles to sidewalls of a building, even a structure whose sidewalls are fibrous wallboards.

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TELEVISION ANTENNA — This radically different type of TV antenna is for use in ultra-high-frequency transmission, expected to play a major role in future television expansion. Designed by General Electric engineers, it is known as a "helical" antenna.

MARINE BIOLOGY

Probe Mystery of Why Tropical Fish Turn Poisonous

► WHY SOME tropical fish, usually edible, suddenly become poisonous as food is being probed by scientists.

Laboratories for these studies are the sun-bleached coral reefs and the blue tropical lagoons of South Pacific islands, some of which are familiar to soldiers, sailors and Marines during World War II. There the fish are caught and shipped frozen to the States. At Loma Linda, Calif., tests are made for poisonous effects.

For people who depend largely on fish for food, the mysterious sudden poisoning effect is a serious problem. Dr. Bruce Halstead of the School of Tropical and Preventive Medicine and his associates hope that epidemics caused by the unpredictable poison outbreaks can be brought under control, and perhaps forecast, when their studies are completed.

While capable of dealing quick death, fish poisons have been known to produce a disturbance known as "paradoxical sensory disturbance" in which there is apparent reversal of hot and cold sensations. A victim of such poisoning would think a glass of ice water a hot drink.

The project has been aided by grants from the Office of Naval Research and the Public Health Service.

Science News Letter, July 28, 1951