

Pathfinder

January 10, 1951: p. 11

Milestones along the road to mobilization

Six months after Korea had jerked the U.S. onto the road toward mobilization, the nation could count these accomplishments:

Manpower. The Army's 10 pre-Korea divisions, none at full strength, brought to 11, plus 4 National Guard Divisions and 2 Guard regimental combat teams called into Federal service. Monthly draft for January, February and March set at 80,000, bringing total since K-day to 450,000. Faster induction stymied by shortages of training cadres, some equipment. Doctors, dentists and veterinarians under 50 were told to register Jan. 15. Some 210,000 face possible military service.

Resources. Cobalt, vital in steel-making and electronics, put under complete Government allocations Dec. 29—first strategic material so controlled. By March television and radio sets will be using cobalt substitutes in speakers; finishes on refrigerators and other civilian products will be affected by diversion of cobalt from paint making to defense.

There'll be fewer pots and pans; more glass containers on grocery shelves—allotments of aluminum, tin, zinc, copper and other materials for civilian use were cut back 20% to 50%. Natural rubber for tires and other products curbed. Government on Dec. 28 became rubber's sole importer and distributor; it already owns most of the synthetic rubber production facilities. Ban on hoarding—by civilians as well as industry—declared for 55 scarce metals: Inventory controls and basic rules for priorities system set up.

Price control. Automobile prices rolled back to Dec. 1 levels; 250 other manufacturers asked to give Government seven days' notice of intended price increases. Voluntary co-operation of all businesses asked in holding down prices. Economic Stabilization Agency, which handles wage and price control, announced it would set up regional offices by March, expects by then to have "500 or 600 employees." (OPA in World War II had 250,000, all but 64,000 of whom were volunteers.)

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Wage control. Wages for automobile workers frozen until Mar. 1 (under auto industry's labor contract, tied to cost-of-living index, no wage increase would have been scheduled until that date anyway). Five labor and four business leaders meet Jan. 10 with ESA officials to discuss a nation-wide wage formula.

Construction. New theaters, amusement places and other "nonessential or recreational" construction barred. Home buying regulations toughened. Rent control extended to Mar. 31.

Credit. Down payments increased, time in which to pay shortened for installment buying of autos, furniture, household appliances and other products. The Federal Reserve System announced an increase in reserve requirements for member banks. (They do 85% of the nation's lending business.) This would cut about \$12 billion in lending power, make it harder for business and individuals to get loans.

Civil defense. All states and major metropolitan areas have appointed civil defense directors. A dozen cities have held, or will hold, attack-rehearsal programs. New York is recruiting 500,000 civil defense volunteers and may turn subways into bomb shelters. Nation-wide air raid warning signals were established. Manuals on atomic attack and bacteriological and chemical warfare distributed. Last week Congress approved a civil defense bill setting up independent agency whose director, on Presidential declaration of an emergency, would have almost unlimited power to seize equipment and facilities and mobilize the entire Federal Government to aid stricken areas.

Administration. Newly set-up war agencies start building staffs. Civil Defense last week had 99 employes, plans ultimately to have 5,000. National Production Authority sees tenfold increase from present 1,000 by September. Altogether Federal employment since K-day has increased 200,000; within six months 300,000 more will be added to the public payroll. The number of public employes last October had reached 6.4 million—just under the World War II record level. They drew \$1.5 billion a month in pay.