

THE BATTALION

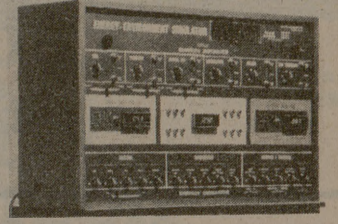
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Conflicting facts hinder policy

By CHERYL HICKMAN

Congressman Morris Udall said the American people have to unlearn some of the old rules that used to apply to energy and the economy. The Arizona representative spoke Thursday to the members and delegates of the Student Conference on National Affairs. Udall is the chairman of the House Committee on Energy and the Environment.

The 56-year-old Democrat began his speech with some humor about Washington. Billy Carter beer and his own try for a presidential nomination in 1976. "I've been trying to forget it," he said.

"Four years ago in February we had a crisis," said Udall in reference to the 1974 Arab oil embargo. "We were all going to change." Yet Congress and the President still haven't been able to come up with an energy policy that they can agree on.

According to Udall, the problem is that there are two conflicting sets of "facts" on how much oil there is in the world, and different groups believe different facts. One group, whose members include Udall and President Carter, believes that the supply of oil and gas is limited and that the remaining reserves should come under government regulation. Under this set of facts, said Udall, the energy policy should be one of conservation and switching to other energy sources such as coal, solar, nuclear and wind power.

"I've seen the wind here in Texas. It could light up the Midwest for the next decade."

The opposing camp boasts such members as Sen. Russell Long, D-La., the oil companies and "Bob Hope for Texaco every night," said Udall. This group maintains that there is still an abundance of oil. Their energy policy, according to Udall, would be to drill deeper and in more places.

Udall said he was doing some research on his genealogy when he realized that most of the major changes in the life style of man have occurred since the 1930s. "Just as my generation was going into high school, there was an explosion."

"The magic word was growth." "We're coming to the end of that kind of exponential growth." Udall said the fantastic growth of those days was based on cheap oil and gas. Because of this, a theory developed that there must be an increase in energy usage and production for there to be economic growth.

But, said Udall, that theory would have to pass into oblivion along with "those old dogmas that say you can't have both inflation and unemployment." Udall classified this as "the era of high energy costs." He said oil production in the United States peaked in 1970 and has been declining ever since.

However, Udall said, the United States is the only major industrial country using more oil now than it did four years ago, when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) nations imposed the oil embargo.

Udall said new laws and thought patterns need to be developed to encourage conservation and a switch to new types of energy. He said that many people never think about recycling products like paper, tin cans and bottles. "I wish the president would really take some leadership on this recycling issue."

"Nuclear power is foundering," said Udall. The expense of the plants and uranium makes nuclear power economically unsound. In fact, said Udall, nuclear power may be more expensive than coal.

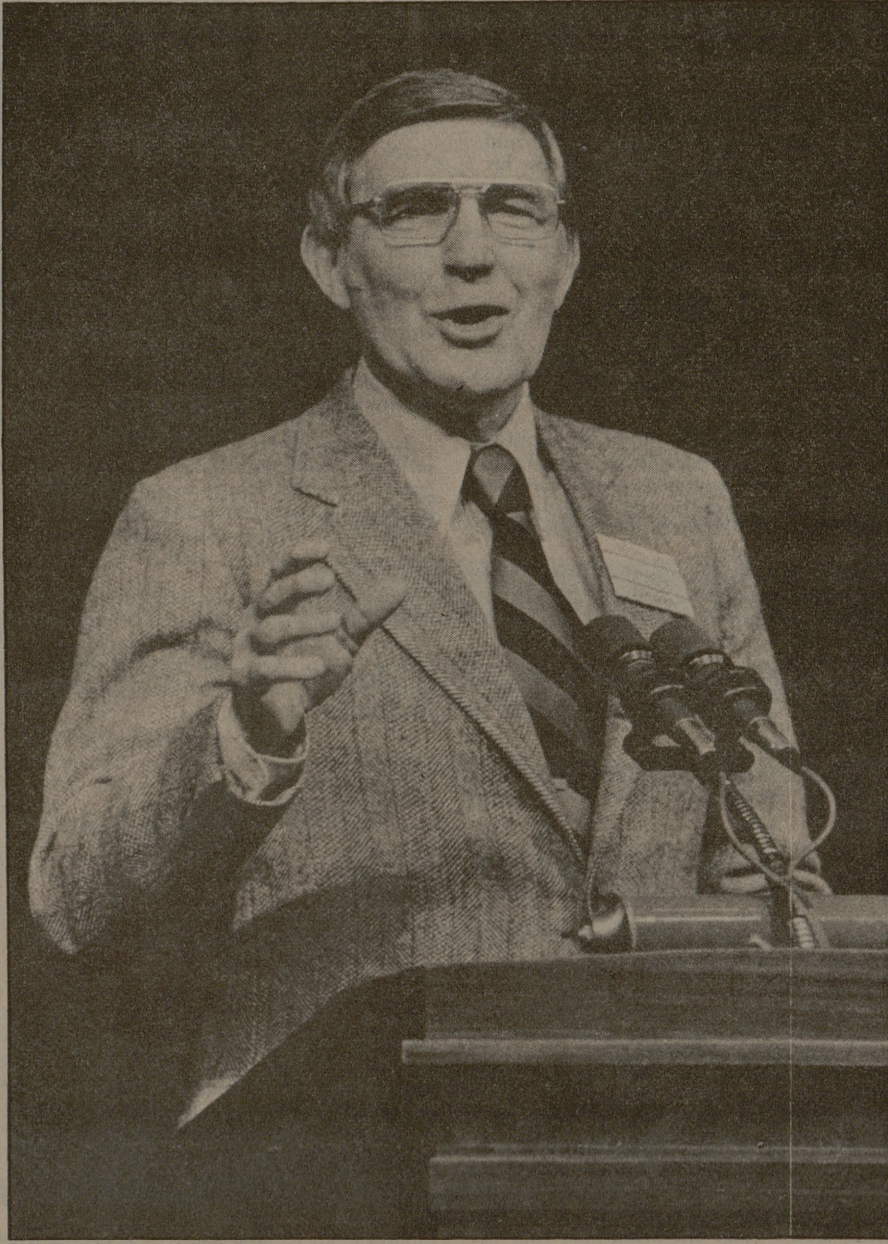
Udall emphasized wind power. "I've seen the wind here in Texas. It could light up the Midwest for the next decade."

Udall said he would prefer for the free market to regulate oil production and prices. "I like the free market. It's the best regulator we have."

However, Udall said, he thinks the free market is on the decline in this country due to company mergers and giant corporations which limit the number of competitive businesses.

Udall said he would like to see some of these big corporations, especially the oil companies, broken up into several smaller businesses. He used the Exxon company as an example and said he would like to see that corporation broken up into four separate companies. Each would have a distinct job: producing, refining, transporting or marketing oil.

People demand government regulation when companies get so much power, said Udall. "It's part of the price you pay for a complicated society that gives us so many things."



Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley

Morris Udall... "The magic word was growth"

Coal talks under pressure, tentative deadline set

United Press International

The Carter administration is stepping up the pressure to end the 74-day-old nationwide miners' strike as dwindling soft coal supplies threaten Americans with more layoffs and less heat, light and electric amenities.

Labor Secretary Ray Marshall kicked off an intensive round of talks in Washington Thursday by setting a tentative two-day deadline for settlement of the longest continuous coal strike in the nation's history.

President Carter, who met with both sides Wednesday, kept up the heat by telling a dozen governors of strike-affected states the tradition of collective bargaining "would be severely damaged" by prolonging the walkout.

But Carter indicated he was still reluctant to invoke the Taft-Hartly Act for an 80-day cooling-off period. The strike by 160,000 members of the United Mine Workers began Dec. 6.

With power producers warning the public to voluntarily reduce electricity use or face mandatory cutbacks, the country scratched its head to find new ways of combating the latest wrinkle in the winter of '78.

Gasoline generators and flashlights did a brisk business, movie matinees in downtown Pittsburgh were suspended; restaurant-goers in Indianapolis dined by candlelight, and Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., suggested his state's utilities burn corn.

Stores shortened shopping hours, colleges and universities curtailed classes, some local government employees were put on a four-day work week, offices were to be closed on Saturdays and some towns snuffed out street lights.

"I've got everything electric that they make, but I'm ready to give it all up and go back to the good old days," said Nan Gump, innkeeper of a Holiday Inn in Zanesville, Ohio.

"I mean it. I could go back to cooking over our fireplace," she said. "If our ancestors could do it, so can we."

Ohio Edison urged customers to cut back on watching television, but Norwalk resident Tim McIntyre said that would be no sacrifice. "I can't stand many of the programs anyway," he said.

Several power companies announced service cutbacks and the specter of rotating blackouts loomed if the situation worsens. Even when the strike is settled, it will take up to another two weeks — by most estimates — for the flow of coal to return to normal.

The layoffs of thousands of workers were announced in affected businesses across the country.

The Tennessee Valley Authority, with only a 25-day coal supply on hand at its 10 key plants, Thursday outlined a plan that could put as many as 100,000 people out of work by the first of the month.

The Norana aluminum plant in Marston, Mo., laid off 356 of its 850 employees, but the men had no hard feelings against the coal miners.

"We support their right to bargain," said crane operator James Winn. "They're

in the same boat we are. All they have is their labor to sell."

In the coal fields, the miners showed no signs of relenting. Some 3,000 striking UMW members rallied at an armory in Fairmont, W.Va. to stir up support for remaining on strike and expelling UMW leader Arnold Miller.

Hundreds of UMW members in roving pickets frightened two non-union mines in eastern Ohio into shutting down, but no violence was reported.

Check-cashing service may end because of monetary losses

By AVA KING

Hot check writing at Texas A&M University has increased 32 percent in the past year.

Bad checks total \$24,088 as compared to \$18,087 at this time last spring. More than 2,000 hot checks were written to the University last semester alone.

The largest amount of bad checks, both in number and monetary value, are received at the beginning of each semester for payment of tuition and fees. Fiscal department records show that during January of this year \$65,000 in checks was returned to A&M due to lack of funds in checking accounts.

A \$5 fine is charged to the bad check writer for every check returned to the University for insufficient funds.

J. Robert Smith, assistant controller of accounts for the fiscal department, termed A&M's check cashing policy as "very liberal."

Individuals are given a 15-day grace period to make cash payment for the check and fine. After this period the fine is raised to \$10.

Texas A&M suspends check-cashing privileges of students who write more than two hot checks. Suspension lasts for the rest of the student's stay at Texas A&M.

When a bad check is returned to the fiscal department a series of three notices is sent to the responsible party. If there is no response the fiscal department asks the student's college dean to tell the student about the returned check and fine.

If the student does not answer the notices the fiscal department may have the student dropped from University rolls or file formal charges against him with the county attorney.

Seven students were dropped from the rolls last semester. The majority of the returned checks are collected on during the

semester. Smith said the only way a student's check record can be cleared is for the University to receive a letter from the student's bank indicating that the check bounced due to a banking error and not from lack of funds.

How does A&M compare to other universities in receiving hot checks?

"Higher than most," Smith said. "Not very many schools have check cashing facilities. It was begun at A&M as a necessary student service because there weren't any banks in College Station."

Because this service is no longer necessary, it may soon be a thing of the past.

"If there is a 30 percent increase in the spring as there was in the fall, action will have to be taken," Smith said.

This action may be increasing the \$5 penalty or stopping the unlimited check cashing policy altogether.



Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley

'Don Pasquale, go to bed'

Norina (Sheila Barnes) tells Don Pasquale (Joseph Warner) where he can go as an amused maid looks on. The opera, "Don Pasquale," was presented by the Texas A&M Opera and Performing Arts Society Thursday night. See related story on page 4.

A&M's got class

"Fans" of Battalion sports editor Paul Arnett respond to his Feb. 15 commentary on the Aggie Band, dancing girls, basketball halftimes and A&M traditions. In "Letters to the editor," page 2.

