

World and Nation

Leaders increase pace of talks to curb output of oil, raise prices

GENEVA (AP) — OPEC leaders stepped up the pace of negotiations Monday over cutting oil production to raise prices but fell short of a final accord, officials said.

Rihwanu Lukman, the OPEC president and chief Nigerian delegate, told reporters the cartel was close to an agreement on individual production quotas. He declined to provide any details of the day's talks.

Officials said the 13 Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries ministers would meet again Tuesday afternoon, but no specific hour was set.

The Venezuelan oil minister, Arturo Hernandez Grisanti, said without elaborating, "We are moving."

One delegation source who was present during Monday's 2-hour plenary session said the key

obstacle to agreement on cutting oil production was Iraq's refusal to accept a quota lower than that of its war enemy Iran.

In an apparent sign of Iraq's displeasure, its oil minister, Qassim Taki al-Oraibi, did not attend the meeting although he was in the same hotel where the closed-door talks were held. His delegation was headed by his deputy, Ramzi Salmon Abdul Hussain, according to sources.

Several ministers attempted to paint a bright picture of what has lapsed into a lengthy and difficult negotiation.

Mana Saeed Oteiba, the oil minister of the United Arab Emirates, told reporters, "We are not very far from the agreement. We have completed the cosmetic surgery and now we are applying the makeup."

Oteiba, a key figure in the talks, previously

had predicted an agreement by last Saturday but was proven wrong.

Despite a deadlock over key elements of the production-cutting plan, world oil markets appeared convinced that OPEC would seal a deal shortly.

In Western Europe, the price of North Sea Brent crude oil for January delivery jumped about 40 cents, to a nine-month high of \$16.10 a barrel. Later, the January contract for West Texas Intermediate — the benchmark grade of U.S. crude — climbed 26 cents to \$16.36 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

"The market seems quite optimistic that the Saudis will pull the rest of OPEC into line," said Stephen Turner, an oil analyst at the investment firm of Wood, Mackenzie and Co. in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Commission suggests raises for federal employees

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal commission called Monday for giving Cabinet officers, members of Congress and federal judges respective pay raises of \$71,200, \$57,600 and \$49,000 a year atop the annual 3 percent boosts going to all federal workers.

The nine-member commission, chaired by General Foods Corp. President James L. Ferguson, labeled as "dangerously inadequate" the current \$70,800-to-\$111,700 salaries of the nation's top 3,027 government officials.

"No group... has fallen so far behind inflation as those to whom we entrust the reins of government," said the panel, known formally as the Commission on Executive, Legislative and Judicial Salaries.

It said the buying power of top federal officials, after accounting for inflation, has declined 41 percent since 1969, compared with only a 5.7 percent drop for lower-level government workers.

During the same period, the panel said, the real, inflation-adjusted income of automobile mechanics and electricians has climbed 33.5 percent and 40.4 percent, respectively.

The recommended increases, if included by President Reagan in his proposed fiscal 1988 budget to be submitted to Congress on Jan. 5, would boost the pay of his 16 Cabinet members by 80 percent, the 535 senators and representatives by 73 percent and the 821 federal judges by 60 percent.

Reagan urged by Senate to stick with SALT II arms limit

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than half of the incoming Senate urged President Reagan on Monday to put the United States back under the limits of the SALT II nuclear arms-control treaty that the United States breached last month.

The letter was signed by 57 of the 100 members of the Senate that convenes next month. It said the U.S. action was an "open invitation to the Soviets" to violate several of the numerical limits in the treaty.

It was the latest expression of congressional unhappiness with the administration's Nov. 28 action when the latest B-52 bomber equipped to carry nuclear-tipped cruise missiles became operational.

That was the 131st B-52 to be converted.

It put the United States above the numerical limits in the unratified 1979 treaty because the Pentagon did not eliminate any existing weapons from the U.S. arsenal. Retirement of current weapons would put the United States back under treaty limits.

House Democrats last week approved a resolution criticizing Reagan's action and pledged to try to get the Democratic-controlled chamber to reverse the decision when Congress convenes next month.

Because SALT II was never ratified by the Senate, it has never been binding on the United States, but both superpowers agreed to abide by its terms. The treaty covers a wide range of strategic weapons issues, including limits on various types of weapons such as bombers, submarine-launched missiles and land-based missiles.

Reagan criticized the pact as "fatally flawed" during the 1980 presidential campaign. But once in office, he pledged to live up to its limits as long as the Soviets did likewise.

The president has charged the Soviets have repeatedly violated the treaty.

Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., who originated the letter signed by 47 Democrats and 10 Republicans, said it was in America's interest to respect the treaty since the Soviets, who have more and different types of missiles, are more constrained by the pact than is the United States.

Families win more than \$50,000 in suit over 'offensive' textbooks

GREENEVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A federal judge awarded more than \$50,000 Monday to seven fundamentalist Christian families who paid to send their children to private schools so they would not have to read public school texts the parents found religiously offensive.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Thomas G. Hull brought promises of an appeal from Hawkins County school board attorney Nat Coleman, who said the decision amounts to public funding of religious education.

"He's requiring the school board to pay tuition for these children at a Christian school," Coleman said.

Hull ordered the families be paid

\$50,521.59 to reimburse them for tuition, school lunches, mileage to and from school and the parents' lost wages while attending depositions and court sessions.

"The amount is not important," Coleman said. "The constitutional question is, and that will be the basis of our appeal."

The parents originally sought \$53,171.59 in out-of-pocket expenses.

Hull ruled Oct. 24 that the school board violated the families' civil rights by forcing their children to remain in reading classes when their parents believed their religious beliefs were being undermined by material in the 1983 edition of the

Holt, Rinehart, Winston reading series.

The families said the books taught evolution, the occult, secular humanism and 13 other anti-religious themes.

Hull, in his October ruling, cleared the way for the children to return to public schools and not attend classes for reading, which could be taught at home.

But during Monday's testimony, parents from six of the seven families said they were afraid to send their children back because of the animosity the lawsuit had generated among school officials, teachers and pupils.

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