

POWER COMPANIES COMBINE TO SAVE

Operating as One Organization Will
Result in Big Conservation of
Oil, Say Managers

San Francisco.—The Pacific Gas and Electric, Great Western Power and Sierra and San Francisco Power companies, serving thirty-eight counties in Northern and Central California, have agreed on a plan to conserve fuel oil used in the operation of steam and electric plants by operating as a unit.

The three companies have agreed to allow all their electric generating plants, both hydro-electric and steam, to be operated under one head. B. M. Downing, chief engineer of the electric department of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, has been selected to take full charge of all of these plants, with authority to carry out their efficient operation with rigid economy of fuel oil and to cease the operation of as many of the steam plants as may be found compatible with proper service. This plan is to go into effect at once and to continue for the duration of the war and during such further time as may be deemed in the best interests of the public.

This action on the part of the power companies is the result of a bulletin recently issued by the United States Fuel Administrator at Washington and the act of Congress of August last, relating to the conservation, supply and distribution of food products and fuel, and is in continuation of action taken by the Railroad Commission of the State of California.

John A. Britton, Mortimer Fleishacker and H. F. Jackson, representing, respectively, the Pacific Gas and Electric, Great Western Power and Sierra and San Francisco Power companies, appeared before the State Advisory Committee of the United States Fuel Administration for California in a session held in the office of the State Fuel Administrator Tuesday, January 15.

The Fuel Administrator in California and his advisory committee suggested a system of lightless nights such as is now in effect in the East. The power companies represented, however, that they had been working with the State Railroad Commission upon a plan which would accomplish practically the desired end. The Fuel Administrator called for a written report upon the plan.

After a subsequent meeting of the executive heads of the power companies and another with Railroad Commissioner Frank Devlin at which L. S. Ready, engineer of the Railroad Commission, was present, the plan of unit operation was agreed upon and was reported to the Railroad Commission and Fuel Administrator Schwabacher.

The report to Schwabacher contains the following announcement:

"We beg to advise in respect to this arrangement that we can not at the present time, due to climatic conditions and lack of water for the full and efficient operation of our hydro-electric plants, determine the actual saving in oil that would be accomplished by the unit operation of the plants of the undersigned companies. We shall be glad, however, to advise you weekly from this date as to the actual savings effected, and we sincerely trust that with the coming of the winter storms we may be able to make a very satisfactory showing to you."

The Universal Gas and Electric Company has advised the Fuel Administrator that it will help in the oil saving plan as far as it can, by curtailing the use of its steam electric plant in San Francisco.

A. E. Schwabacher, Federal Fuel Administrator for California, said:

"The efficient manner in which the conservation plans have been outlined should be of great benefit, not only to the United States Government at this time, but also to the State of California, where conservation of oil is so vital to the continued operation of our shipbuilding, industrial and munition plants. This patriotic action by the power companies means hundreds of thousands of barrels of fuel oil saved by the people of California."