PeS@ to t11e NEWS
by PHYLLIS SCHLA.FLY
Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415

RELEASE: January 2

ENGINEERING ANNIVERSARY

The 200th anniversary of the founding of the first engineering school in America will be observed at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, on June 9. It was at Valley Forge on June 9, 1178, at the end of the historic winter encampment, that General George Washington first called Americans to the study of engineering.

The General Order issued by General Washington read as follows: "Three Captains and nine Lieutenants are wanted to officer the companies of Sappers. As this corps will be a school of engineering, it opens a prospect to such gentlemen as enter it and will pursue the necessary studies with diligence, of becoming Engineers and rising to the important employments attached to that profession, as the direction of fortified places, etc.

"The qualifications required of the candidates are that they be natives and have a knowledge of mathematics and drawing, or at least be disposed to apply themselves to those studies. They will give in their names to headquarters."

Because engineers do not often go into politics and government, our history books often overlook their importance. George Washington is known as President and General, but the engineering side of his career has been neglected. President Herbert Hoover, an engineer himself, paid tribute to Washington as an engineer with words inscribed on a bronze plaque at Valley Forge.

Hoover pointed out how modern Washington was in his engineering operations. He was "reclaimer of the Dismal Swamp, advisor and engineer of the Potomac and James River Canal, the first advocate of a combined highway and waterway from the Atlantic coast to the Ohio River, one of the earliest Americans to recognize the possibilities of power transportation by water, and the first to suggest that air navigation might be very useful to the people of the United States."

(more)

One of the few engineers ever to serve in the U.S. Senate was George W. Ma1one. His uniqueness in profession was matched by the uniqueness of the Congressional investigation he conducted.

As Chairman of the Minerals, Materials, and Fuels Economic Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Senator Malone issued a report on July 9, 1954 entitled "Accessibility of Strategic and Critical Materials to the United States in Time of War and for Our Expanding Economy."

Engineers are builders and concerned that essential materials will always be available to continue building and defending a great and prosperous America. And so it was that 24 years ago Senator Malone's investigation pointed out the folly of having allowed our nation to become dependent for many of our essential raw materials on sources in far-off lands, many under the control of fickle allies or timid neutrals, some under the guns of our potential enemies.

What concerned the engineer-statesman who led this important investigation was that "none of this vulnerability need exist." While the United States does not have every essential raw material, the Subcommittee concluded that "the Western Hemisphere can become completely self-sufficient in the production of the necessary critical materials in time of war."

The Malone Subcommittee recommended a national policy of eliminating our dependency on remote, unfriendly, or neutral areas for the 77 critical and strategic materials vital to our national survival. The specific plan spelled out by the Subcommittee report included tax incentives for production of critical materials, stockpiling minerals and materials, and research to develop energy resources to assure maximum availability.

The politicians filed the Malone report in the circular file, perhaps because it didn't seem relevant to the elections of the 195Os. Now that the oil crisis has proved the folly of U.S. dependence on imports from half-a-world away, it's time that we listen to the advice of American engineers who build for the future instead of for the next election.

(end)