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**Tankers Line Up Off East Coast
Seeking Dock Space to Unload**

By DAVID A. ANDELMAN

Scores of oil tankers are lining up along the East Coast, for the dwindling dock space and scarce storage facilities to unload their cargo, according to Coast Guard and petroleum industry officials.

And, according to several oil cargo executives, in some rare instances the captains of ships owned by freelance "speculators" have also been looking for the best price they can get for their precious product.

It is the mild winter weather

Venezuela Oil Price Up

Venezuela, a major United States supplier, raised its tax-reference price for crude oil by 81.9 per cent to \$14.08 a barrel. That will not be the market price, but a basis for calculating tax and royalty payments. Page 31.

and a heightened consciousness of the need to conserve energy sources, officials said, that have caused the tanks to fill to capacity, creating the shortage of storage facilities. And the heavy tanker scheduling, in anticipation of record-high demand by the oil companies, has kept the sometimes-inadequate unloading bays filled to capacity as well.

Governors of at least four East Coast states have expressed concern over possible bottlenecks in the flow of petroleum — Governor-elect Brendan T. Byrne of New Jersey going so far as to say that the "tankers were out there waiting for their price."

Oil industry officials themselves, however, assert that the long lines at the unloading

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quays are not causing any major bottlenecks and point to the Federal regulations established by the Cost of Living Council to indicate that even if they wanted to they could not profit by holding up oil deliveries waiting for higher prices.

But a survey of ports along the Northeastern coast yesterday disclosed at least two dozen tankers waiting for space at dockside, lying in Federal anchorages.

Figures of the Maritime Association of the Port of New York showed that tanker arrivals in the port for the month of November, before the real pressure on facilities began, amounted to 262—up nearly 10 per cent over a year ago.

Most of these ships, officials said, belonged to the major United States oil companies. But there may be others out there that are not theirs.

'A Risky Business'

A senior cargo expert with the Exxon Corporation said that he had received scattered calls from "speculators," or European-based operators who have purchased tanker-loads of petroleum in the hope of selling them along the coast of the United States at substantial profits. He said he had referred the calls to corporate headquarters in Houston. He added that the calls were "rare."

But other corporate officials conceded that the major oil

companies, in the event of major shortages, particularly during periods of extreme cold, have purchased from these "speculators." They cautioned, however, against any images of hordes of buccaneer tankers cruising the East Coast, seeking crisis areas to unload black-market oil at outrageous prices.

"It's such a risky business, it's just not done on a large scale," one industry official said. "And our problem now in many cases is not finding the refined product, it's finding a place to put it."

"The tanks are generally pretty full because of the warm weather," said E. J. Karle, vice president of Chevron Oil Company in Perth Amboy, N. J. But he added that the full tanks were for the refined oil products—fuel oil for heating and gasoline for automobiles. As for crude oil, he said, the embargo on shipments from the Middle East is already being felt.

Chevron, he said, has cut its refinery production in New Jersey from 100,000 barrels a day to 70,000 barrels. Arch Smith, spokesman for Exxon in New York, said its refineries were down to operating at 80 to 85 per cent of capacity.

"The distillate [refined] product is pretty high right now," Mr. Smith added, referring to Exxon's full storage tanks. "We just haven't had the cold weather drawdown that we normally have in November and December."

Most officials said it was the mild weather and the extensive

fuel-conservation measures that have been taken in the face of the energy crisis that have sharply decreased the demand and left the oil companies with far larger stocks on hand than they planned for.

Lefkowitz Comments

State Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz, whose office has begun to examine the supply and storage situation in New York State, said yesterday that "the tanks are filled to the hilt," while, he said, some 18 tankers from 600 to 800 feet in length were unloading in the New York Harbor area.

In Connecticut, Gov. Thomas J. Meskill ordered an inquiry into reports of tankers awaiting entry into the New Haven port. Earlier this week, he finally told a news conference that there "were slowups in off-loading."

"The delays have been caused, according to the harbor-master, basically by tankers waiting for dock space or tidal changes," the Governor told a Hartford news conference. "We are monitoring the situation. We want to make sure there are no slow-ups that will contribute to an already serious situation."

Other East Coast Governors — Francis W. Sargent of Massachusetts and Milton J. Shapp of Pennsylvania — joined Mr. Byrne in expressing their concern and ordered state agencies to monitor the movement of petroleum products into the ports of their states.