

THE

Senate Votes Extension of Oil Compact

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 13—

The Senate approved today extension of the interstate compact to conserve oil and gas. The approval came after Senator Edward M. Kennedy extracted promises that the appropriate Senate committee would consider his idea that Congress assume veto power over the oil import system.

The Massachusetts Democrat proposed an amendment to the compact bill that would, in ef-

fect, have required the President to submit any plans for the import program affecting national security to Congress for 90-day review. But he withdrew it after assurances that the Senate Finance Committee or the Senate Interior Committee would consider his proposal and hold hearings.

The Finance Committee's chairman is Senator Russell B. Long, Democrat of Louisiana, who is a major supporter of the quota system.

Mr. Kennedy's plan came

on the eve of a meeting at Camp David, Md., of President Nixon's study group on the import program. The meeting represents the first review of the controversial system since it was established in 1959.

The oil import system sharply limits oil imports on the ground of national security. It is aimed at encouraging domestic petroleum exploration and production to assure United States independence of foreign oil sources.

Major oil companies have op-

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posed abolishment of the quota program. Supporters of its abolishment contend that the system costs American consumer millions of dollars annually in higher charges for gasoline and heating oil.

Members of Congress from New England have maintained steady opposition to the program in an effort to get duty-free oil into Machiasport, Me. The oil would be duty-free by the creation of a foreign trade zone, which would enable a proposed refinery to move

heating oil into the United States.

Mr. Kennedy's amendment was challenged by Senators from the oil states as not being germane to the compact bill, which was reported out by the Senate Interior Committee because it would amend the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

Off the Senate floor, Senator Kennedy, the majority whip, said his proposal would "serve as a reminder" to the Administration that the "Amer-

ican people ought to have a voice in any justification for this program."

The interstate compact bill, which now goes to the House of Representatives, would extend the compact until Sept. 1, 1971. Twenty-nine states are members of the compact, under which states require practices that forbid waste of oil and gas. The compact specifically forbids any activity that might limit production for the purpose of fixing prices.