

MEMORANDUM

TO: MR. FULTON

FROM: MR. ROBINSON

SUBJECT: CAUSTIC SODA

*To Sen Kilgore
Re Caustic soda in which
you were interested.*

As indicated by correspondence, you have conducted some investigation at the request of Senator Kilgore regarding a surplus of caustic soda, particularly as it pertains to Mr. Stubblefield of the Belle Alkali Company of Charleston, West Virginia.

For your information in evaluating Mr. Stubblefield's complaint, reference is made to Mineral's Yearbook page 1396. From information contained therein it would appear that sodium carbonate is used primarily in the glass industry and secondly, is used to manufacture caustic soda. In manufacturing caustic soda a lime soda process was used and the use of this process decreased between 1939 and 1940, which decrease was brought about by an increased demand for chlorine. The chlorine was obtained by the electrolysis of sodium chloride (salt), and in connection with this production, caustic soda results as an ~~unfavorable~~ ^{unavoidable} by-product.

Reviewing past investigations conducted by the Committee it is pointed out that as an incident to the construction of ordnance plants it was necessary to construct chlorine producing facilities. The chlorine produced apparently being used in the manufacture of ~~powdered asphalt~~ ^{poison gas} in army bombs. It is also pointed out that in the magnesium program for chlorinizing magnesite, large chlorine producing facilities were necessary and, although the chlorine is used over and over again, additional

chlorine must be introduced into the feed to keep up the required strength. There is also an intention on the part of magnesium manufacturers to market the surplus supply of chlorine for other uses by the War Department.

From the foregoing it would appear that the method of making caustic soda has been entirely revolutionized which has been further aggravated by the increasing demand for Chlorine, both of which factors have apparently glutted the market with caustic soda. While Mr. Stubblefield's complaint is undoubtedly ~~un~~warrented, my own opinion is that there has been no direct effort on the part of the government to build chlorine plants as such, and the production of caustic soda has been an ^{unavoidable} ~~unfavorable~~ incident.

To Sen. Kilgore I think we will have to drop the complaint
Hugh A. Fulton