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The Truth About Gas in Europe

OF ALL the effects of the small war in the Middle East, none hit the Western European tourist market as badly as the sudden rationing of gasoline. But even as March opened and the Canal remained as stuffed as a cold-infected nose and the Syrian oil pipe remained broken, the gasoline situation suddenly began to ease. Although the gas curtailments had cast a cheerless gloom over much of Europe in mid-winter, by the very edge of spring the list of the countries still rationing fuel was down to three—England, France, and Turkey. Every other country had been able to abolish all rationing and driving restrictions in advance of the tourist season.

There were chances of course that Britain and France, which depend so heavily on travelers from abroad, still would be able to return to normal driving by mid-summer. In the meantime there would still be restrictions, albeit mild ones, and this is how they will affect the American car traveler this summer:

In Britain, overseas visitors who drive their own or hired cars will be given coupons for all the touring they want to do. Tourists who buy cars for later resale in Britain are being given a gasoline allowance of 1,000 miles for the first month, 500 for the second, and 500 for the third month. Those who borrow a car from friends are granted 500 miles for the first month, and 250 for each of the following two months.

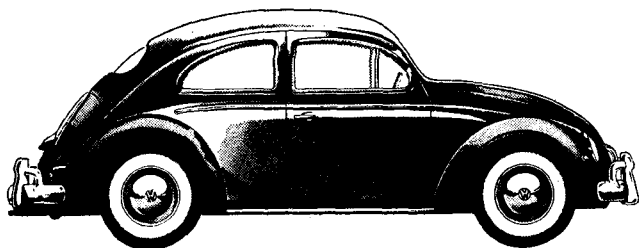
The procedure for securing coupons

for touring has been simplified too: those who hire cars get gasoline coupons upon filling in a declaration saying they are a visitor and presenting their passport to the car-hire firm. Those who bring in their own car, or buy a car for later resale or export, can obtain coupons from the Automobile Association, Royal Automobile Club offices, or from the Regional Petroleum officers of the Ministry of Power. These regulations and allotments apply also to British subjects on leave after a tour of duty abroad of a year or more.

France, which had been requiring everyone except members of the AAA to pick up ration cars at their local French prefecture (where the *flics* most certainly don't speak English), will change the whole procedure commencing April 13. As of that date those who bring their own cars or who purchase French cars can secure ration cards by showing their customs documents of the vehicle at banks which are authorized to exchange foreign currency. The rub here is that the tourist will have to exchange at the official rate the amount of dollars it will take to purchase the amount of gas covered by the coupons which are being issued. This means that the car traveler cannot take advantage in his gas purchases anyway of the difference between the free rate and official rate, which runs roughly about fifty francs to the dollar. Gas in France is about seventy-five to eighty cents a gallon and this brings it up another 15 per cent.

As for allotments, tourists who remain in France for three days will get 6.6 gallons each day up to ten days. Another allotment of 6.6 gallons a day is granted every ten days as long as the traveler remains in France. Naturally this will work to the advantage of those who will drive small European cars which can get, say, thirty miles to the gallon. But it isn't an overabundance for the big-car driver who wants to cover a lot of territory.

In Turkey, the officials assure us, overseas visitors will be granted all the gasoline they need for touring whether it be in their own or hired car. As for permit cards, car-hire companies will do the work for you. When driving your own, you can apply at the local municipal (mayor's) office for a card.



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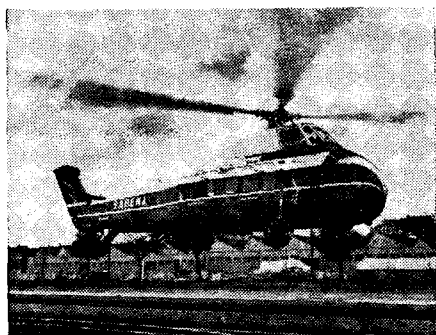
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Up in the Paris Air

PARIS (BY CABLE).

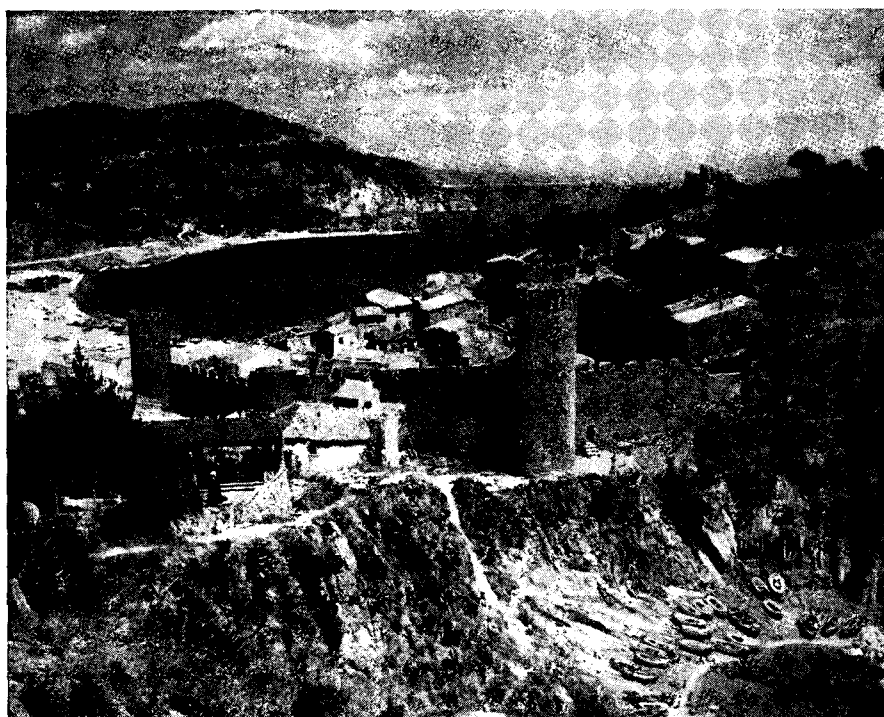
THE UGLY duckling of the skies—the man-made helicopter with an American label—has caught the eye and the fancy of Brussels and Paris.

The calm of a mild sunny Sunday, with that touch of spring bottled in Paris already in the air, was broken at noon by the whirring propellers of eight rotor-driven aircraft as they descended at the new Balard Heliport in the heart of Paris under the shadow of the Eiffel Tower. The conclusion of the flight of the largest number of helicopters ever to fly in formation marked an important milestone in the amazing growth of air travel, making Paris the twelfth city served by Sabena, the world's first scheduled airline carrying passengers by helicopter.

Many government dignitaries were at Balard and there was a sense of excitement that seemed in keeping with the writing of a new page in the history of man's conquest of the air. Cameras were clicking all over the field, television crews were grinding away at every opportunity, and with all the serious goings on there was an amusing coal-to-Newcastle episode: the presentation of a hat for his wife to the mayor of Paris by an American organization of millinery manufacturers, properly photographed, of course.

Rarely has the press of all Europe sent so many emissaries. Nearly a hundred from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Great Britain, Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States nestled in Sabena's eight Sikorsky S-58 helicopters for the historic 180-mile flight that has as much significance for the United States as for Europe. The altitudes varied from 800 to 1,200 feet; speed averaged eighty-five miles per hour.

The takeoff was under perfect flying conditions from Allée Verte Heliport, only a stone's throw from the famed Palace Hotel in Brussels, where all guests and correspondents were quartered. A large crowd was drawn to the



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