

Coastal Drilling Permits Subject of State Hearing

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL, Assemblyman, 46th District

The subject of exploring for oil and gas pools under the land or under the sea is a always controversial anywhere along the shores of the United States. Then, when the exploration for oil and gas results in the discovery of oil and gas in quantities sufficient to make drilling and pumping profitable, another argument breaks loose, blood pressures climb rapidly, and the voices of people on both sides of "a gasoline war," sometimes called "an oil drilling fight," become loud and shrill. This is especially true when anyone mentions oil drilling in or near Santa Monica Bay.

During the 1955 General Session of the California State Legislature, I introduced an amendment to an oil drilling bill, Assembly Bill No. 3402. My amendment, which became part of

Chapter 1724, Statutes of 1955, prohibits drilling for oil and gas from the Ventura County line (north of the City of Santa Monica) to Point Vicente, near San Pedro, except where cities owned their own tideland grants from the State, and where such grants gave the cities the authority to vote for or against oil drilling, thus preserving to those cities the right of home rule. You can find my amendment in the Public Resources Code, California Statutes, published by both the West Publishing Co. of St. Paul, Minn., and the Bancroft-Whitney Co., of San Francisco, available in any lawyer's library.

ONE REASON for extending the protection from the Ventura County Line to Point Vicente in my 1955 amendment was the great difficulty always found in writing a law which can be understood by

laymen, lawyers, and judges. It would be difficult for anyone to argue about the boundary line between Ventura County and Los Angeles County. Also, Point Vicente sticks out like a sore thumb.

The City of Los Angeles already had an old tideland grant from the State permitting it to explore and drill for oil and gas. Since Venice, Playa del Rel, and San Pedro are all portions of the City of Los Angeles, my amendment of 1955 protected the City of Los Angeles from being robbed of its oil and gas by the State of California, but at the same time the City of Los Angeles could not legally permit exploration for oil and gas, or drilling for oil and gas, without the authority of the voters of the City of Los Angeles, acting through their selected mayor and city council.

looking frantically for new sources of revenue. I have received no communications from anyone about oil drilling for many years, but on Monday, Aug. 17, at 4:45 p.m., I received a telephone call from a citizen. He told me that on the following day, Tuesday, Aug. 18, there would be a regular meeting of the State Lands Commission, at 9:30 a.m., and that he recommended that I be there with lawyers, geologists, petroleum engineers, and other experts who might help me protect the people of the 46th Assembly District against any possible violation of their rights.

The reason for the alarm was that the citizen who telephoned me had just learned that the State Lands Commission would probably approve the request of the City of Los Angeles to lease to oil corporations the right to explore for and drill for oil and gas

in Santa Monica Bay. I started telephoning lawyers, geologists, and petroleum engineers. I received some praise, a few words of advice, and the loan of two law books, but nobody whom I called was available for the hearing. Therefore, I ate a fast dinner and studied law and geology until I retired at 2 a.m.

AT 8 A.M. Tuesday morning, I left home and reached the Old State Building in Los Angeles in time to ask the State Lands Commission to delay the issuance of the permit to Los Angeles for oil drilling until the next meeting of the Lands Commission in order that the rights of all the people be fully protected.

The State Lands Commission, which consists of Lt. Gov. Glenn M. Anderson, State Controller Alan Cranston, and State Director of Finance Hale Champion, was exceedingly fair and permit-

ted me to state the questions which I thought should be explored in detail before granting the permit to Los Angeles. One of my arguments was that drilling for oil by Los Angeles might suck up oil belonging to other cities, including Redondo Beach and Hermosa Beach.

The danger of noise, ugly drilling platforms, and disturbance of fish was ably presented by another witness. At about noon the State Lands Commission announced that my request for a continuance was granted and that the case was postponed until Thursday, Sept. 24, at a time and place to be announced later. Anyone interested should write to Mr. Francis J. Hortig, Executive Officer, State Lands Commission, California State Building, 217 W. First St., Los Angeles 12, Calif., and mail a copy to me at Post Office Box 327, Redondo Beach, Calif.

Sirens Due For Workout

Los Angeles County and City civil defense sirens will be sounded throughout the county at 10 a.m. Friday in the customary alert-systems test held on the last Friday of each month, Sheriff Peter J. Pitech announced.

As is customary, the combined warning systems will be sounded first in a steady wail for two minutes. After a 30-second interim of silence a one-minute undulating sound will be heard to conclude the test, said Pitech.

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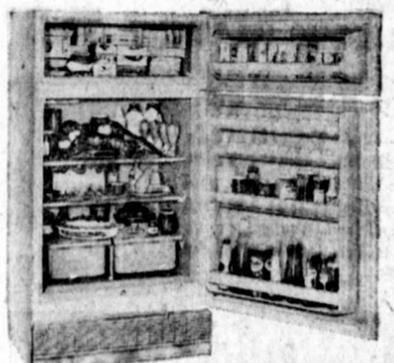
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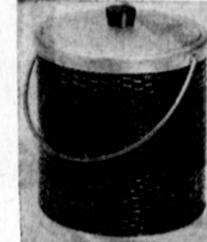
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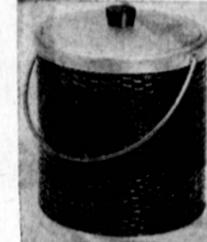
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