

Politically Explosive Estes Probe Begins

By JOHN A. GOLDSMITH
Of the United Press International

WASHINGTON — Senate investigators opened their long-awaited investigation of the Billie Sol Estes case Wednesday by hearing a statement that it was "inconceivable" that government inefficiency alone enabled the Texan to amass thousands of acres of improper cotton allotments.

This assessment was given to the Senate investigations subcommittee by Paul E. Kamerick, the group's assistant counsel

and coordinator for the Washington phase of the committee's staff study of Estes' operations. Kamerick was the first witness. Agriculture Secretary Orville L. Freeman was scheduled to testify later in the day.

Even as the politically explosive hearings got underway, Sens. Karl E. Mundt, R-S.D., and Edmund Muskie, D-Maine, became involved in a dispute over the possible outcome.

Muskie said he could not resist noting Mundt's opening comment that "We enter these hearings . . . with no prejudg-

ments," and the senator's following statement that "It appears that we will find glaring examples of indecision, conflicting decisions, and duplications . . ."

Something Is Amiss

Mundt said he was sorry Muskie saw fit to "challenge" the remarks, and said he stood on both of them. He added that no one could follow the staff inquiry without learning that something was amiss in the Agriculture Department.

"I did not challenge the statement; I simply read it," Muskie replied.

Kamerick said inefficiency probably did play a part in the case. He said the subcommittee might want to consider proposing "a major reorganization" of the Agriculture Department and farm program which he said had been developed "piecemeal" fashion over the century of its existence.

But Kamerick said that "a system which permits inefficiency encourages dishonesty and some of the facts we have developed are hard to explain merely on the basis of inefficiency."

Kamerick also made these points:

- Undersecretary of Agriculture Charles S. Murphy overrode an adverse personnel recommendation and directed the appointment of Estes to the newly official Agriculture Department Cotton Advisory Committee Dec. 22, 1961. That was the same day Murphy participated in a later-rescinded decision that Estes' 1961 cotton allotments should be canceled.

- Two of 11 internal audit groups operating in the department began independent investigations of Estes operations in 1961. Neither learned until early this year of the other's inquiry. The two investigations were never coordinated.

Kamerick testified after Chairman John L. McClellan, D-Ark., opened the inquiry with a pledge to try to nail down whether the government showed favoritism toward Estes. He said the subcommittee also would look into the "efficiency and integrity" of agriculture employees who dealt with Estes.

Efficiency Scored

McClellan said the importance of making sure that the department is operating efficiently and honestly was underscored by the fact that "through it during the current fiscal year approximately \$7.1 billion were expended."

The chairman noted that in 1961, 8,717.8 acres of cotton allotments were transferred from one location to another throughout the United States.

"Of this number 60 per cent were transferred to two counties in Texas, Reeves and Pecos. Of the total transferred to these two counties, 60 per cent accrued to the benefit of Billie Sol Estes. The inequity is apparent. It is rather clear that something is wrong, that a breakdown of some type has occurred."

More than 50 witnesses have been tentatively scheduled to testify in the Senate hearings which are scheduled to last for the better part of a month. More than 30 subcommittee investigators have been doing the preliminary spadework in the study with research centered in Washington, Texas and New York City.

John Cofer, an Estes attorney, asked the continuance Tuesday night.

Cofer told the court examination of prospective jurors had demonstrated that they had read and heard things about Estes' activities that would be prejudicial to him. He argued that many of the things that have been written or broadcast about Estes have no relation to the case at trial and would not be admissible as evidence.

Contending it would be impossible for his client to obtain a fair trial, Cofer asked the case be continued "two or three terms of court" if necessary.

Defense lawyers questioned veniremen closely about whether they were familiar with newspaper, wire service, magazine, radio and television accounts of Estes' activities, his indictment on federal charges and courts of inquiry and congressional investigations. All said they were.

Hume Cofer, another Estes attorney, told the veniremen the state accuses Estes of defrauding Thomas A. Bell of \$162,144 in a transaction involving the purchase of fertilizer tanks. Cofer said the evidence would show Bell knew details of the transaction, that "nothing had been taken from him" and that he received \$55,000 in profits from the deal.

If convicted, Estes could be sentenced to prison for two to 10 years.

Estes is being tried on one of eight counts in an indictment returned by the Reeves County grand jury on complaints of six farmers, who claimed he bilked them of \$828,576 in agreements involving fertilizer tanks.

Experiment Slated

PORTLAND — A Portland high school will use teaching machines as an experiment next year. The school board Monday night authorized the purchase of 30 machines. They will be used in first-year algebra classes at Grant High School.

In Pittsburgh 13 Cons Sit Atop Tower In Protest

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Thirteen inmates are perched on a water tower at Western State Penitentiary Wednesday in a protest over conditions at the institution.

It was anyone's guess how long they would stay there. Prison officials decided to wait them out. They are on a catwalk about 100 feet above the ground.

Six prisoners scrambled up the tower shortly after dinner Tuesday night to join a convict who had been on the tower since Monday. They had stuffed their pockets with food.

Then, with buckshot flying, six more prisoners dashed across the prison yard and up the tower a short time later.

The whole thing started Monday afternoon when inmate Robert Payne, 29, formerly of Washington, D. C., climbed the tower, protesting the treatment of prisoners in solitary confinement.

He said he wouldn't come down until he was assured a chance to speak with a state official.

On the tower the 13 prisoners displayed some bedsheets sewed together with this message written on it: "We are protesting brutality. Our presence (presence) is to support Payne's allegations and dispute the claim of the warden."

Warden James Maroney said that three guards fired two when the second group of six shotgun volleys into the air dashed for the tower. He said the shots were intended only as a warning.

For a time, prison officials spent anxious moments, fearful that a riot might develop among some 750 prisoners in a recreational area.

"Amazing as it may seem," Maroney said, "they were all very quiet."



(AP Wirephoto)

The Rev. Graham H. Walworth, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Long Island community of Northport, looks at sign he posted on his outdoor bulletin board protesting the Supreme Court's decision banning an official prayer in New York public schools. Top of sign reads: "Congratulations Khrushchev!" Below it are headlines from New York newspapers on the court's decision. At bottom of sign is invocation: "God Help America."

Rector Replies

High Altitude Device Injures Two Workers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Defense Department confirmed Wednesday that two workmen suffered minor injuries when the rocket intended to carry a nuclear device to high altitude was exploded shortly after launching from Johnston Island a week ago.

When first asked about the report, a spokesman referred to the statement made at the time of the launching and said "as previously announced, there were no injuries."

Several hours later, the spokesman said this: Two days after the firing it was learned that two workmen "sustained minor scratches from debris from the rocket."

The injuries were caused when debris from the Thor booster rocket, which was destroyed deliberately after a malfunction had been detected, struck near the two workers and then ricocheted, the spokesman said. Parts of the rocket fell on Johnston Island, nearby

Leader Calls Halt

Oran Terrorism Appears Ended

By ANDREW BOROWIEC
Of the Associated Press

ALGIERS — Leaders of the terrorist Secret Army Organization (OAS) in Oran, which has virtually held that city in its grip for months, appeared Wednesday to be giving up the bloody struggle.

It was too early to be certain that the secret army was fading from the scene in the western Algerian city. But there were these indications:

- French authorities reported that former Col. Jean Defour, one of the secret army leaders in western Algeria, made a broadcast Tuesday night ordering a halt to sabotage in Oran.

- Unconfirmed reports circulated in Oran that ex-Gen. Paul Gady had fled Oran with several of his aides. Gady had announced he was taking over leadership of the secret army after several top figures in the organization were captured.

- Pierre Laffont, the director of the Oran paper, Echo d'Oran, and a leader of the European community, said Algeria should become independent in peace. In an editorial, Laffont called on residents of the Oran area to avoid new suffering during the days leading to independence.

- There were no fresh reports of violence in Oran, which has been tortured by explosions

and fires for weeks. Telephone communications, cut by sabotage, were returning to normal.

A huge fire on oil tanks on the waterfront caused authorities to close the port Tuesday, blocking the exit of European refugees by ship for at least 48 hours.

- Rene Soyer, a French official who has been trying to mediate between Oran's secret army and the Moslem National Liberation Front (FLN), predicted a peace agreement by Friday. He left for Oran, apparently taking new instructions.

Other officials also expressed optimism that a deal could be worked out and terrorism halted in the west Algerian port before Algeria's Moslem majority endorses independence in a self-determination referendum Sunday.

Soyer began his mediation efforts after the deserter French officers directing European resistance in Oran rejected the peace pact worked out 10 days ago between the Algiers' secret army command and the Moslems.

WAC Recruiters Here Thursday

Two WAC recruiters will be in Eugene Thursday to discuss the Women's Army Corps programs with women high school and college graduates in Lane County.

The WACs, 1st Lt. Evelyn P. Foote, WAC programs officer from Sixth Army Headquarters in San Francisco, and S/Sgt. Arlene P. Patt, of Army Recruiting Main Station, Portland, will be at the U.S. Army Recruiting office, Eugene Post Office Bldg. basement, Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. standard, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daylight.

Appointments with either woman may be made by calling DI 4-8244.

Estes Gets Delay In Felony Trial

PECOS, Tex. — Billie Sol Estes was granted a postponement Wednesday of his trial on charges of defrauding a Reeves County farmer of \$162,144.

Judge J. H. Starley granted a requested continuance on the defense contention that the much-indicted West Texas promoter could not get a fair trial in his home county.

Judge Starley said the only question now is when and where the trial on state felony theft charges would be held.

The district judge said that after hearing both the defense motion and the stand taken by the state he felt it would be futile to attempt to try the case in Reeves County at this time.

Although both the state and change of the trial site to another city, Judge Starley said he was still considering that possibility.

Dist. Atty. R. B. McGowan told the court the state did not join in the defense motion for continuance or agree with the defense's contention that a jury could not be obtained for a fair trial.

But he said he felt the procedure of usually granting a first continuance should probably be honored.

Wheat Crop Allotment Set for '63

WASHINGTON (AP) — A wheat marketing quota referendum is set for July 24.

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman set the date Tuesday when he announced a 1963 wheat allotment of 55 million acres.

Freeman said he was making the announcement with the greatest reluctance and only to comply with the 1958 law which he criticized sharply.

A temporary wheat and feed grains program which superseded that law expires at the end of this year, and the House killed last week the tight controls program the Kennedy administration asked for next year.

Freeman said there was slight hope Congress still will enact a new law affecting the 1963 wheat crop. If that happens, he said, "the announcement made today can be vacated."

Approval of marketing quotas for the 1963 crop would set the national average support price for wheat at not less than \$1.82 per bushel. That would be 75 per cent of the estimated parity price for wheat as of the beginning of the 1963-64 marketing year.

The department said this minimum average price will not be reduced but may be increased if the combination of the wheat parity price as of July 1, 1963, and wheat supply relationship as of that date indicate higher prices.

For price support purposes, the department said, the estimated total supply of wheat for the 1963-64 marketing year is 166 per cent of the normal supply.

Under the law's supply formula, the wheat support price—whenever the supply is more than 130 per cent of the normal supply—is said to reflect 75 per cent of parity.

The national average support price of 1962 crop wheat was set at \$2 a bushel.

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