

Texans Predict New Rush For Offshore Oil Leases

By SAM DAWSON
HOUSTON, Tex. (AP)—Oilmen see a new land rush in the making. Spirited bidding for oil leases is predicted when the federal government opens its share of the submerged lands off the shores of Louisiana and Texas, possibly this month.

And Atty. Gen. Edmund G. Brown of California hails the recent refusal by the Supreme Court to consider a challenge to the offshore oil act as helping clear the way for granting of state leases for wells directly into submerged oil resources he estimates as worth billions of dollars.

Some strange new equipment may be used when the oilmen go seeking oil along the continental shelf in the Gulf of Mexico.

One outfit advertising is said to be as big as a small ocean liner. It expects to drive piles into the floor of the Gulf, then jack itself up above the waves, and later when it's time to move on, its planners

say it should be able to pull up stakes and start over again at another likely spot.

COSTS HIGH
Costs will run high, both for drilling and for leases.

Once Texas cleared title to tidelands for 10 miles out—the federal government holds title beyond that—it got 35 million dollars out of lease sales.

The highest price paid for a lease, they cover 5,000 acres on the bottom of the Gulf was three million dollars.

Louisiana leases haven't gone on the market yet. It's still feuding. The federal government says Louisiana's historic limit is three miles. The state claims three leagues (about 10 miles) as in the case of Texas.

Many oilmen say the oil prospects seem better off the Louisiana than the Texas shore. And bidding may run even higher when the leases are put up. Drilling on old leases (predating the court and congressional squabbles) already extends as far as 25 miles offshore.

Oilmen say that the cost of locating a producing well offshore averages three times that of getting one onshore.

Then why do they want these tideland leases so badly?

TIDELANDS
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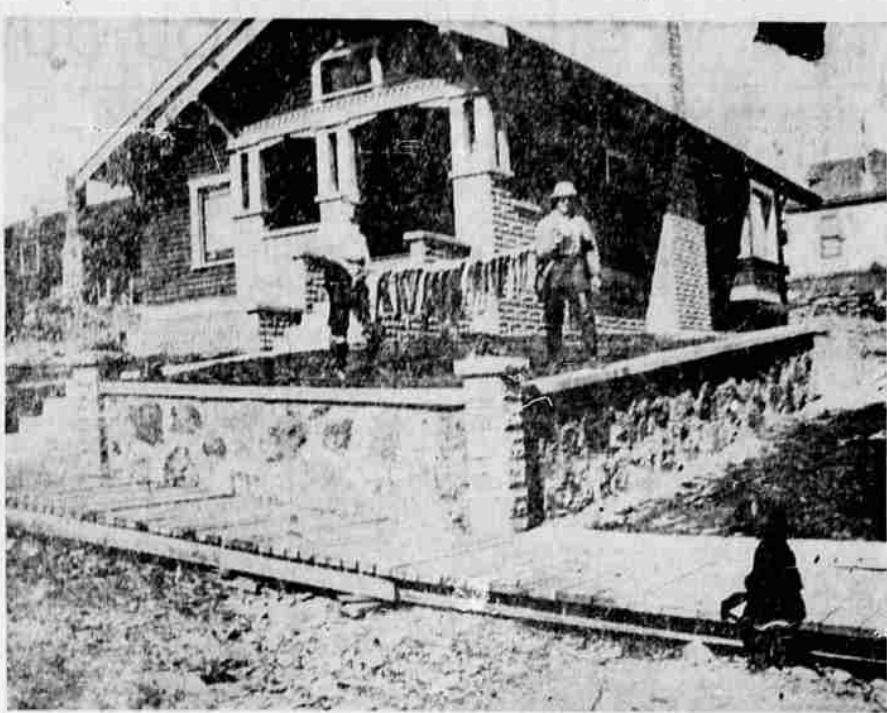
E. W. Webb, vice president in charge of production for the Continental Oil Co. here, says, "Drilling offshore is like going from a poker game where the chips are 10 cents to one where they're \$10."

The average cost of drilling a well in the tidelands is put by various oilmen as from 1 to 1 1/2 million dollars. Hence a dry hole is an expensive failure.

Because the stakes are so high, companies tend to team up to lease sites and to spread the risk by drilling in several places.

At present, 23 rigs, of all companies, are reported drilling offshore on old leases—they have to prove up on them before they run out. Since December, 20 outfits have filed intention to drill, and four platforms have been put in place in the water for drilling.

There would be more drilling now but for the lack of platforms and equipment, according to Continental's president, L. F. McCollum. He thinks there'll be a scramble for leases when the government sets the rules and calls for bids. And he fears his competitors will bid high.



FISH PICTURES seem to be in order right now, and here's another that dates back to the days when Link River occasionally blew dry. The gentlemen shown here picked up this catch of trout in one of those dry periods. Left is Carey Ramsby, and supporting the other end of the pole is Fred Houston.

Asian King Asks Freedom

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—The round-faced young man leaned forward.

"I am seeking independence, real independence, for my country. Not just a paper independence."

The speaker was Norodom Sihanouk, 32-year-old king of Cambodia, one of the three Indochinese states.

The French, who have controlled this country most of the last century, know the King means what he says. He and his ministers have obtained one concession after another. Cambodia today controls all the armed forces in its territory.

The King, brought up in French schools in Indochina and France, has no hatred of France. He would prefer to continue as a member of the French Union but wants its form changed to resemble the more loosely organized British Commonwealth. Like Viet Nam, he insists Cambodia as a matter of pride must have independence.

First, then, decide about joining the French Union.

Cambodia is about Kansas-size. Like Egypt, it draws lifeblood from a mighty river, the Mekong. The four million Cambodians, their country rich in natural resources, are inclined to take life easy. But they export rice, cattle, dried skins, fish and rubber.

The King has a vigorous political life and a jam-packed personal life. He is at home on an elephant, dressed in glittering ancient robes, or balancing a champagne glass with Western diplomats. He likes horseback riding, amateur movies and jazz. Occasionally he picks up the saxophone in the royal orchestra. He composes popular music and leads the little band in jam sessions.

He occupies a graceful tiled-roof palace complete with air conditioning, a swimming pool and a garage full of sport cars, next door to the elephant stables. One of the most important palace buildings is a Buddhist temple where the King worships. Its floor is of solid slabs of silver.

The black-haired King is still a bachelor, though the father of 11 children. It is said that so far no royal consort has found favor with the Queen Mother.

April Fool's Joke Backfires

ZANESVILLE, Ohio (AP)—Mayor Sherman Johnson of Zanesville, a grocer, was convinced it was an April Fool's Day joke when the telephone rang yesterday.

A voice on the other end said: "This is radio station WHZZ. How would you like to get your name on a nationwide radio broadcast by helping stimulate the sale of butter now that support levels are changed? All you have to do is sell butter at half price tomorrow."

Deciding to play along with a gag, Johnson said he would do better than that; he would give away a pound with every \$5 purchase.

Last night he heard his "promise" aired over the facilities of the National Broadcasting Co.

"Well," he sighed, "I'll keep my word."

TROUT APLENTY

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—The old lady who lived in the shoe didn't play in the same league as lake trout. Wisconsin fish managers collecting spawn for hatchery operations got 7 1/2 quarts of eggs—a potential of 300,000 young lake trout—from 50 female fish. That's 6,000 each.

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Record Flight Said Routine

NEW YORK (AP)—The Navy says it was just routine, but three jet pilots streaked cross-country Thursday in less than four hours the first time it has ever been done.

Fastest time was made by Lt. Comdr. Francis X. Brady, 33, of Virginia Beach, Va. He flew from San Diego to New York, a distance of 2,438 miles, in 3 hours, 45 minutes and 30 seconds.

The official jet mark—from Los Angeles to New York, a distance of 2,457 miles—is 4 hours, 8 minutes and 3 seconds.

Next to set down his Grumman F9F Cougar at Floyd Bennett Field was Lt. (jg) John C. Barrow, 27, also of Virginia Beach. His time was 3 hours, 46 minutes and 49 seconds.

The third pilot was Lt. Wallace (Bud) Rich, 28, of Palo Alto, Calif., who took 3 hours and 48 minutes.

The three men, all attached to Navy Flight Squadron 21 at Norfolk, Va., took off from San Diego at one-hour intervals in this order: Brady, Rich and Barrow.

Although non-stop, the jets were refueled by tanker plane near the Hutchinson, Kan., naval air station.

When the trio landed, no timer from the National Aeronautics Assn. was on hand to record the marks.

A Navy spokesman said: "It was just a routine flight."

U.N. Action Called For By Arabs Over Border Dispute

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. (AP)—Arab delegates pressed today for an urgent U.N. Security Council meeting to bring Israel to task for the latest border killings in neighboring Jordan. Israel quickly branded the move an "effort to cover up Jordanian guilt" by spotlighting isolated cases.

Lebanon's Arab member of the 11-nation council, called formally last night for a hearing on the raid last Sunday night on the Jordanian village of Nahalin in which nine Arabs were killed, Lebanon said it was acting on behalf of Jordan, which is not a member of the U.N.

Meanwhile, Western delegations studied the possibility of a broader hearing on the whole worsening situation in Palestine.

ARAB DEMAND
The latest Arab demand for action in the U.N. was made in a letter from Lebanese Delegate Edward A. Rizk to Russia's Andrei Y. Vishinsky, president of the Security Council this month. Rizk said he hoped the council would take up the matter next week.

The Lebanese letter followed a complaint by Jordan's Foreign Minister Hussein F. Khalidi Wednesday to U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld asking for "drastic and efficient action" immediately to prevent any more Israeli raids on Jordan.

Israel herself, on March 25, made an urgent plea to the Western Big Three for immediate council action on the Arab slaying of 11 Jewish passengers aboard a Negev Desert bus March 17. Israel charges the attackers were from nearby Jordan but Jordan denied this.

A U.N. armistice commission investigated the Nahalin raid and condemned Israel last Tuesday "in the strongest terms" for the attack. It called on Israel to seize and punish those responsible.

BOYCOTT
Israel had boycotted the commission, on which Israeli and Jordanian representatives normally sit, because its U.N. chairman, U.S. Navy Cmdr. Elmo Hutchinson, had refused to denounce Jordan for the bus massacre the week before.

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Polish Communists Losing Popularity

Editor's Note—Frederick Kuh, Chicago Sun-Times correspondent, recently spent two weeks in Poland with greater freedom of movement than any Western correspondent has had there in many years. His uncensored reports, being condensed in the Sun-Times today, have been condensed by The Associated Press for publication here. A previous article appeared last week. All this material is copyright 1954.

By FREDERICK KUH
An astute observer in Warsaw said a free election in Poland today would give the Communist government less than 20 per cent of the vote. This is of course an arbitrary judgment. But from talks with many scores of plain citizens, foreign ambassadors and even top Communist leaders, it seemed to me a reasonable estimate.

The people are fed up with propaganda. They are bored to death with glorification of the Soviet Union, for which millions of Poles have no love.

A prominent member of the Communist Central Committee said the regime made a grave propaganda error.

"It lacked the courage to tell the people the situation was bad and they would have to suffer," he said. "Our regime lied about the well-being in the country."

I was told that a confidential sampling, conducted by a responsible Polish state authority, revealed more than 500,000 Poles listen regularly to foreign broadcasts despite jamming. Many more are said to listen at irregular intervals. Every intelligent Pole with whom I discussed this topic spoke highly of the British radio and poured ridicule on the Voice of America and on Radio Free Europe. They said the BBC, while hostile to Red Poland, is truthful and objective. They said the Voice and Radio Free Europe "droll propaganda and are often inaccurate."

I heard and saw much of the social advancement. I visited several creches, state medical clinics, workers' homes, colleges and universities—many places where the class that was till a few years ago grossly underprivileged today is on top. Social and economic benefits add up to about one third more than the average citizen's earned income.

The great negative factor, about which the government is discreetly silent, is the immense gap between wages and prices. On the basis of the hours the Polish citizen must work to buy common articles, living costs are 3 to 10 times higher than in the United States. The leaders know communism must do better than that if it is to attract people in countries with a decent living standard.

Culturally, Poland presents a few bright spots in a predominantly bleak scene. Cultured Poles told me the theater has deteriorated. They said films—12 full-length films are produced yearly—are poor and modern painting is mediocre. Great effort is being made in music, but many gifted musicians were Jews who vanished in the gas chambers. The oasis in this cultural desert is books. Poland never had such a flood streaming from the presses—world classics and Polish works.

Poland is busy digesting almost one fourth of prewar Germany. In August 1945 the United States, Britain and Russia put under Polish "provisional" administration the German provinces of Silesia, Pomerania and most of East Prussia. Poland, backed by the Soviet Union, has disregarded the provisional character of this arrangement.

Polish officials said the Poles,

especially in the "recovered regions," register immediate anger and some nervousness whenever America or Britain gives the slightest encouragement to West Germany's campaign for revising the Oder-Neisse frontier. The Polish Communist regime's grip on the nation is strengthened by U.S. promotion of West German rearmament and by America's fence-straddling on the German-Polish border issue.

The government has been packing the new western territories with so many workers, peasants and military and air bases that nothing short of full-scale war could uproot Polish power there. I talked with the vice president of the Stalinograd (Katowice) County Council, Jerzy Zientek.

"There was a sense of insecurity here in 1945-46," said the Silesian official. "Now people see the state's big investments in reconstruction, industry, agriculture, schools, homes. They've come to believe the Oder-Neisse frontier is permanent."

Stanislaw Kulczycki, deputy speaker of Parliament, told me five million Poles have been settled in the new territory and the population is less than 1 per cent German today.

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