

'Raw Wildcatter' Could Alter Lake County Future

Big Gamble Taken For Black Gold

By FLOYD L. WYNNE

Four miles south of Lakeview, several hundred feet from the highway, a 156-foot oil derrick splits the sky and 25 men labor in a venture that could change the entire future of this sheep and cattle country.

Masterminding the operation are two men whose combined experience in the oil business spans a 60-year period.

The roar of the pumps completely muffle whatever noise may be emanating from a slowly turning bit that bites deeper and deeper into the volcanic earth, already some 7,850 feet below the surface and gnawing an average of 100 feet per day into the bowels of the earth.

It's a "raw wildcatter" in the parlance of George Dabney, field superintendent for the Humble Oil Company. Frankly admitting that it's a big gamble, Dabney is just as quick to admit that he doesn't have the slightest idea in the world whether it will or will not pay off.

"Dry Hole" Dabney, as he terms himself, is a throwback to the days of the early oil wildcatters, a man with the bulldog purpose that will keep him drilling until he's told to stop, but with that love of excitement that comes only in a world of surprises.

His "partner" in this Lake County venture is much the opposite in many respects. Ray Anderson, another veteran of 30 years in the oil fields, is smaller, quieter, but just as tenacious in his fight for success.

When asked about their working arrangement, Anderson said, "It's a case of a Wyoman and a Texan getting together in Oregon."

Actually, Anderson is "tool pusher" for the Sun Drilling Company which is drilling the well on a daily contract basis for the Humble Oil Company.

Anderson pointed out that his firm is responsible for the drilling of the well, and that Dabney is responsible for the "hole."

The two work together like a well coordinated pair and consult closely on all operations of the well.

Neither man knows how deep they'll be permitted to go in search of the liquid gold, and neither knows what the prospects are of its being successful.

Regarding the odds of the gamble, Dabney pointed out that the national average of wildcat wells being successful is 25 to 1 against them. He added that the national average of all types of wells drilled is down to about 9 to 1, explaining that you'll drill nine dry holes while hitting one good one.

As we toured the operation, that 19 1/2-inch bit continued to bore away at the bottom end of that 7,850 foot length of pipe.

Chemically impregnated water continues to flow down and around that bit, carrying drilling particles back up to the surface, where they are constantly being tested in a trailer, dubbed "the laboratory" by Dabney.

"They won't even let me in there," he said, casting a big thumb toward the lighted trailer located just a few feet from the drilling operation.

Located about 500 miles from the nearest oil producing well, and about 350 miles from the nearest gas producing well, this operation represents about a \$12,000 monthly payroll that is flowing into the city of Lakeview.

Neither man could pin down a definite cost of the operation, but Dabney indicated that a 10,000-foot well in this area would cost about \$250,000. The complete cost of the machinery involved in the drilling is estimated at \$800,000.

Power for the operation is provided by five V-12 Caterpillar engines which also throw off heat to keep the men more comfortable at the operation site.

As you stand and watch that constantly turning bit, knowing that it is biting deeper and deeper into areas never before penetrated at this particular site, and listen to the gurgling sound of the murky grey water swirling around the base of the operation, you begin to sense some of the "excitement" of the unexpected that obviously fills the life of both Dabney and Anderson.

Dabney put it neatly when he pointed out that "I've drilled many a producing well, but when you know that you can drill a well to 10,000 or 14,000 feet and it will produce oil, it gets monotonous."

There's talk of going at least 10,000 feet, perhaps deeper. The final decision of how deep to go goes with Humble Oil Company and its engineers. Dabney and Anderson will push the well as deep as they want.



THIS OIL DERRICK rises 156 feet into the sky about four miles south of Lakeview. Drilling operations continue and have reached a depth of 7,850 feet. The Sun Drilling Company is conducting the drilling on a contract basis for the Humble Oil Company.

"We can go down 25,000 feet if they want us to," Anderson stated.

At the rate of progress now, it would take about another 20 to 25 days to reach the 10,000-foot level.

What happens if they hit it? Asked this question, Dabney said, "It wouldn't convert this area into a boom town," he admitted, "because today, the expansion of this type of thing is orderly and carefully done."

However, behind his answer, one could sense that should the well prove successful, the future destiny of this wide open land of lakes and livestock would undergo a big transformation.

SS Tax Rates Are Still 3%, Employers Told

Social Security tax rates for old-age benefits are still three per cent, A. G. Erickson, district director of the Internal Revenue Service, today reminded Oregon employers.

Erickson said he was issuing this reminder in response to a large number of calls he has received about an insert mailed with the Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return, Form 941.

"The insert called attention to an increase in the federal unemployment tax from three per cent to 3.1 per cent applicable to wages paid on and after Jan. 1, 1961," Erickson said.

He explained that this particular tax (FUTA) is paid entirely by the employer and reported to the Internal Revenue Service on Form 940, Employer's Annual Federal Unemployment Tax Return. Employers of four or more individuals on at least one day of each of 20 weeks are those liable for the tax.

Erickson said the Social Security tax remains the same, three per cent withheld from the employee's wages, and three per cent paid by the employer, or a total of six per cent. These rates apply to the first \$4,800 of wages.

He said these taxes are reported quarterly on Form 941.

He also said the social security rate for the self-employed remains at four and one-half per cent.

Fire Kills Five Tots

TEXARKANA, Tex. (AP)—Flames sweeping through a house occupied by 12 persons killed five tots 3 months to 4 years old Thursday night.

The victims all were grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Sanders, a Negro couple with whom three daughters made their home.

One of the survivors, Benny Earl Sanders, 9, said one of the children shouted as the blaze was discovered: "I'm on fire—the quilt is burning!"

Firemen said the bedding somehow came in contact with an open heater in a room where six children had been put to bed.



ACTUAL DRILLING OPERATIONS are shown here at the base of the towering oil drilling derrick. In foreground is the drilling core that drops to a depth of 7,850 feet into the earth. The ten and five-eighths inch drill bit can work for about 18 hours before it must be replaced. In background, center, is George Dabney, field superintendent for Humble Oil, consulting with one of the drillers.

Senate Confirms Lemon For State Commission

SALEM (AP)—The Oregon Senate confirmed 24-3 Friday the appointment of E. R. Lemon to the state Scholarship Commission.

Votes against confirmation were cast by three Democrats—R. F. Chapman, Coos Bay; William A. Grenfell Jr., Portland; and Boyd Overhulse, Madras.

The matter has been controversial for many months because of Grenfell's opposition to Lemon. The Senate Interim Committee on Executive Appointments first voted against confirmation, and then reversed itself.

Grenfell made a half-hour speech Friday in which he said Lemon, a retired dean at Oregon State College, was "a very arrogant man, autocratic, and has a hard-nosed attitude."

A half-dozen senators, led by Sen. Monroe Sweetland, D-Milwaukie, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, vigorously defended Lemon.

Sweetland said Lemon had been the determining factor in making the commission, created by the 1959 legislature, a success. The commission has considered scholarship applications for the state university and colleges from 3,400 applicants, but had funds for only 770 of them, Sweetland said.

"Dean Lemon is positive, firm and a tough official of our state," Sweetland said. "He brings a lifetime of experience to the commission."

Sen. Anthony Yturri, Ontario, Senate Republican leader, said "Grenfell has submitted to evidence that Dean Lemon is arrogant. Dean Lemon is a patient, reasonable and understanding person with great depth."

Yturri said Grenfell was basing his position on rumor and hearsay.

The Senate Education Committee had voted 4-1 Thursday to confirm Lemon's appointment, despite Grenfell's objections.

Aikinson, the ranking officer among the 24 generals attending, said it will cost \$3 billion a year to operate.

The sessions, which end Saturday, are closed to newsmen.

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THESE TWO MEN join forces in the surging drive into the depths of the earth near Lakeview in the quest for oil. Left is Ray Anderson, "tool pusher" for Sun Drilling Company which does the drilling on a contract basis, and at right is George Dabney, field superintendent for Humble Oil Company, the firm financing the exploration.

On The Record

BIRTHS BOYS
 REED — Born to Mr. and Mrs. Delford John Reed Jr. Jan. 26 in Klamath Valley Hospital, a boy weighing 7 lbs., 7 ozs.
 ANDERSON — Born to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph W. Anderson Jan. 25 in Klamath Valley Hospital, a boy weighing 8 lbs., 5 ozs.
 CAMPBELL — Born to Mr. and Mrs. Glen Campbell Jan. 25 in Klamath Valley Hospital, a boy weighing 8 lbs., 4 ozs.
GIRLS
 MADDOX — Born to Mr. and Mrs. George Maddox Jan. 26 in Klamath Valley Hospital, a girl weighing 8 lbs., 11 ozs.
 KEELER — Born to Mr. and Mrs. Tom Keeler Jan. 25 in Klamath Valley Hospital, a girl weighing 7 lbs., 5 1/2 ozs.
 VOGEL — Born to Mr. and Mrs. Donald Vogel Jan. 25 in Klamath Valley Hospital, a girl weighing 8 lbs., 11 ozs.
 GIRLS — Boys —

HERALD AND NEWS, Klamath Falls, Ore. Sunday, January 29, 1961

Lights Won't Go Right For Even City Policeman

An officer working the police "desk" becomes accustomed to a variety of complaints, but Officer Fred Olin was taken aback Friday morning when a woman called to say she couldn't make all the lights on Main Street. "Think nothing of it," Olin advised. "I've never made them all a yet."

Would Take U.S. Post

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Dr. Sterling M. McMurrin, academic vice president of the University of Utah, said Thursday he will accept the post of U.S. commissioner of education if it is offered to him.

Dr. McMurrin said he has been recommended for the commissioner's post by Welfare Secretary Abraham Ribicoff. McMurrin returned to Salt Lake City Thursday night after a conference with Ribicoff in Washington, D.C.

He said he hopes to get a leave of absence from the university if President Kennedy names him to the post.

McMurrin, 47, was a philosophy professor before moving into administrative work at Utah.

Other police reports: Mrs. Norman Doty, 1905 Arthur Street, said the left rear window of her car and the radio antenna were broken Wednesday night in the parking lot behind the Holiday Bowl.

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