

Nixon Proposes Channel Sanctuary

President Nixon has asked Congress to approve legislation canceling 20 Federal oil and gas leases in California's Santa Barbara channel, scene of the nation's worst offshore oil spillage. The leases, purchased by seven oil companies in 1968 for \$177.9 million, would be canceled to create a marine sanctuary of about 198,000 acres of ocean between Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz Island. Excluded from the cancellation would be three leases on which oil is currently being pumped; these would be operated, according to Nixon's plan, to reduce pressure in the channel's fragile geological formation. Also excluded from the cancellation would be 51 other leases in the channel, outside the sanctuary. Compensation for the loss of the leases would be determined by the courts and paid by crude oil from the Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Reserve, California.

The enabling legislation, to be sponsored by Senator George Murphy and Representative Charles M. Teague (both R-Cal.), is likely to be criticized both on Capitol Hill and by conservationists. One area of criticism was outlined for *Science* by Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), who introduced legislation on 28 February 1969 which would terminate all 71 leases in the Santa Barbara channel, except those three on which there are producing wells. Cranston's bill would also provide a different, and less expensive, method of compensation to the oil companies.

The sanctuary area recommended by the President extends the area of the existing state sanctuary seaward to the island of Santa Cruz. The state sanctuary area is a 16-mile stretch along the coast, centered in Santa Barbara, and extending 3 miles out to sea. Nixon said the leases to be canceled are in this area. But, according to Cranston, only 16 of the leases are in this area; four of them are outside. If these four can be terminated, Cranston says, why not the others too? The well that blew out last year was beyond the limits of Nixon's proposed sanctuary, and so are several great natural seeps which pose a "continuing threat" to the coastline.

Cranston called the President's proposal "a step in the right direction" but "too little and too late." Lois Sidenberg, president of Get Oil Out, which is a conservation group in Santa Barbara, also said that the Nixon proposal did not cover enough leases. "You could have as damaging an accident or a blowout outside the sanctuary as within it," she told the *Washington Post*.

Another likely criticism concerns the compensation for the loss of the oil leases. Nixon's plan would cancel 20 leases where oil and gas have never been found in significant amounts, despite extensive exploration for the last 2½ years and the drilling of at least seven wells. Cranston thinks it is unwise to pay the companies the original purchase price for the leases that haven't produced. His bill would base compensation to the oil companies on the fair market value of the leases—which is likely to be less than the original cost—on the day the government terminated the leases. Representative John Moss (D-Calif.), of the subcommittee on Conservation and Natural Resources, Committee on Government Operations, also said that compensation should be based on the value of the leases, not their original purchase price.

Nixon's method of compensation would be unique—like the concept of the Teapot Dome scandal of the 1920's, when public oil rights were oil from the Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Reserve is unlikely to please the Navy, which has already raised objections; and it may revive memories of the Teapot Dome scandal of the 1920's, when public oil rights were compromised there. And it is possible that Standard Oil of California, which operates Elk Hills for the government, could make a double profit—once for running Elk Hills as it speeds up production, and once for compensation of its lost channel leases.—NANCY GRUCHOW

found that neither friendship nor party loyalty would keep the Wisconsin senator in line.

Early in the New Frontier administration, when congressional Democrats were striving to help the new president, Proxmire exhibited his stubbornness. He filibustered for 19 hours in an unsuccessful attempt to block Kennedy's appointment of Lawrence J. O'Connor, Jr., a former oil company executive, to the Federal Power Commission. Then he blocked a key Kennedy farm program. But when the Milwaukee Democratic chairman complained, Proxmire retorted, "I was elected by the people of Wisconsin, not by the President."

Lyndon Johnson's first sting from Proxmire came on Washington's birthday, 1959, when the new senator from Wisconsin took the floor to deplore Majority Leader Johnson's domination of the Senate. To Johnson, this was rank ingratitude. Only a few months earlier, Johnson had bypassed older members to give Proxmire a seat on the Agriculture Committee, an ideal spot for a dairy-state senator. But to Proxmire, all that mattered was that more senators should have a hand in making party policy.

After the speech, there was a saying that on 23 February the Senate heard two addresses: Washington's Farewell Address (read annually) and Proxmire's Farewell Address. "Other senators called me and said, 'Give it to 'im, Proxmire,'" he recalls. "But nobody would join me. . . ." Some say LBJ never forgot that speech. Proxmire insists, however, that it was not held against him. "President Johnson was a professional politician," he says. "He didn't bear that kind of grudge."

Some of Proxmire's closest friends in the Senate have also been known as maverick Democrats—Paul Douglas of Illinois, Wayne Morse of Oregon, and Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania. All three are gone now—Douglas was defeated in 1966, Morse and Clark in 1968—but Proxmire continues to operate in their tradition of outspokenness and independence.

He was especially close to Douglas, a respected professional economist, and has carried on much of Douglas's work. It was Douglas who initiated, a decade ago, the slow and unpopular inquiry into Pentagon spending. The administrative assistant who helped Douglas in that early effort, Howard Shuman, now works for Proxmire.

The year after Douglas's defeat, Prox-