

pertaining to the classification of prospectively valuable oil and gas lands. The letter responds to the House Government Information Subcommittee's inquiry of February 26, 1960, about the departmental rule or regulation which permits the use of the restrictive term "Not for Public Inspection" on the documents in question.

Mr. Beasley states that "the Department had not authorized the use of the marking in question at the time it was affixed (1956) nor is such a marking authorized now."

I am pleased to learn that there was no departmental authorization for the use of the restrictive designation "Not for Public Inspection" on the 1956 document setting the criteria for classification of oil and gas lands. Since indiscriminate use of secrecy stamps on public documents should be avoided, I am glad that the Department does not now authorize use of the stamp "Not for Public Inspection."

I hope all departmental employees have been notified that the "Not for Public Inspection" stamp is not authorized so that it will not be again mistakenly used.

Please inform the House Government Information Subcommittee exactly what steps the Department has taken to inform its bureaus and constituent agencies of the prohibition against the use of the "Not for Public Inspection" stamp.

Sincerely,

JOHN E. MOSS, *Chairman.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D.C., April 7, 1960.

Hon. JOHN E. MOSS,
*Chairman, Special Government Information Subcommittee of the
Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. MOSS: This letter responds to your further inquiry of February 26 concerning certain documents pertaining to the classification by the Geological Survey as prospectively valuable for oil and gas.

As we have stated, the documents are available to the public. So far as we can ascertain, the first inquiry in respect of the documents was made by members of Senator Gruening's staff in October of last year in connection with hearings on S. 1670. Thereafter, copies of the documents were furnished to the Senator's office and presumably have been included in the record of the hearing.

Insofar as section 161 of the Revised Statutes is concerned, we do not agree with your interpretation of the Department's answer to the questionnaire which you mention. However, you are quite correct in assuming that we are aware of the amendment recently made to that statutory provision. In turn, we assume that you are familiar with the statement made by the President when he approved the amendatory legislation.

The Department had not authorized the use of the marking in question at the time it was affixed (1956) nor is such a marketing author-