

in the oil shale lands and whether the person was and is a Department of Interior employee or an official. It would behoove this Committee to determine whether any high officials in the Department of Interior collaborated with anyone to keep the oil shale lands available for location of mining claims until the best oil shale lands were tied up with new claims.

(D) Withdrawal application helps claimants

It seems strange that the application for the withdrawal order was filed by the Department on or about January 27, 1967 after all the best oil shale lands were tied up. Since some 2 trillion barrels of shale oil reserves were clouded by the new claims, what was there left to protect?

The application for the withdrawal order now actually operates to the benefit of the new claimants because claimants will not have to perform \$100 worth of annual assessment work per claim, which would amount to a total of around \$2.5 million per year, to keep the claims from being relocated by other persons. See article 38 in my oil shale series, published August 31, 1967. One should be entitled to wonder—was the application for withdrawal order filed to protect the interests of the American people in the oil shale lands or was the application for the withdrawal order filed to protect the interests of the new claimants?

(E) Elimination of claims costly

Gentlemen of the U.S. Senate, I wonder whether anyone in the Interior Department and in the Executive Branch or in Congress has considered what it will cost the United States to determine the validity of all the 25,000 new mining claims—claims which could have been prevented from being filed only if the Department had had the "strength" or courage to act as a responsible public trustee.

IX. PROPOSED OIL SHALE EXCHANGE AND LEASING REGULATIONS

Gentlemen of the Senate I now address my testimony to the proposed oil shale "swap" or exchange and leasing regulations published in the Federal Register on May 10, 1967.

(A) Swaps or exchange regulations

The proposed regulations for the exchange of "private" oil shale lands for Federal oil shale lands should not be adopted until it is determined by the Attorney General and the President that the United States does not have any remedies available to recover the lands or their values on all previously wrongful disposed oil shale lands in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.

Gentlemen of the Senate, you must know that thousands of acres of oil shale lands were given away by irresponsible administrators in the Interior Department who did not bother to properly examine pre-1920 mining claims upon which applications were processed to patent. Many of these claims had been declared null and void. Many were phony in all respects. Many were never valid for any purpose. Thus disposals under guise of pre-1920 mining claims were and are void—if only the Interior and Justice Department officials would have the courage to initiate suits to remove the cloud on the Government's titles which have resulted from patents issued in violation of law.

Failure on the part of the Executive Branch officials to pursue to secure the elimination of clouds on title on oil shale lands disposed under guise of pre-1920 mining claims constitutes fraud in the high levels of our Government.

Why don't the exchange regulations contain standards to guide the action of administrators? How are the disputes over shale values in the lands to be resolved? What standards are there in the regulations to guard against strengthening monopoly positions by way of exchanges of lands? If regulations for swaps are to be adopted, why not require the Secretary to set up a board of economists who are not oil company related, to advise on improving these regulations and later to screen any applications.

(B) Leasing regulations

The oil shale leasing regulations are designed to continue the transfer of the vast public domain oil shale reserves into the hands of the giant oil companies and other powerful private interests which are and have been robbing the public for many years. And it must be quite obvious that these proposed regulations are a follow-through to the Rifle Oil Shale Plant giveaway to the major oil companies. The proposed oil shale leasing regulations are designed to foster and to sneak a fraud over on the public even though the public is given an opportunity to submit comments to the Interior Department before regulations are adopted.