

or committed themselves to the tune of some \$600 million for drilling in this area, hoping to recover oil from a pool which many geologists consider to be the best untapped source of oil in this country.

As I say, most of these explorations and drillings now in process are off the coast of Santa Barbara County. Santa Barbara County is an area certainly including the city of Santa Barbara which is beautiful and which has comparatively little industry and which depends a lot for its income and economy on resort travel and homes for retired persons.

The service—or servicing, perhaps I should say, portions of the oil industry lie in Ventura County, also in my district.

The ships which go out to the drilling sites, the oil well supply companies, all this sort of business is in Ventura County. I am sure you all will understand that this presents the Congressmen representing both of these districts with some problem.

Santa Barbara County, understandably, wants to protect the beauty of its shoreline. Ventura County wants to profit again, understandably, from the prosperity of oil development.

I think all of this can be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of my constituents of both counties. And I think the Secretary of Interior has laid down very reasonable restrictions on drilling.

However, we still are faced with the possibility of serious oil pollution. Hopefully, of course, it will not occur. I do not envy this committee its responsibility of trying to do what I know you are trying to do, come up with reasonable legislation which will be fair to the oil industry and also will protect the people along the shore from potential pollution from oil escapes.

As I understand it—let me first say I have just gotten back, a day or two ago, from California, and I asked Mr. Eric Silberstein, from my office, to research this problem very carefully, and he came up with some problems I had not realized existed. I am sure you and your staff do.

LEGAL PROBLEMS

I will mention them for the record. One that you might be involved with—three areas of law: international, admiralty, statutory and common law.

One thing that concerns me is the Liability Act of 1851 which, as I understand it, places a limit on liability to actions in rem, which of course means that if a ship or an oil rig should become faulty and cause pollution, the action by those injured would be limited to the value of the ship or the oil rig or device.

Furthermore there is a lien provision, as I am told, giving maybe quite properly, or placing a limitation on total liability and giving lien holders, the employees, the first lien.

One thing I would hope this committee would consider is going beyond limiting actions to in rem and authorize them in personem so the owners of the oil rigs involved also could be sued in the event of liability.

GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATION

One other thing that concerns me in the bills that I have seen, that we have studied, is what seems to me to be an insufficient consideration of the geographical problems.