

Without going into detail—it is covered in my statement but we do have in Santa Barbara, off the coast, drilling going on beyond the 12-mile limit. Now, if a well, a drilling device, a rig, should become faulty and dump oil into the ocean, it could easily come in and ruin the shoreline along Santa Barbara from an area beyond the 12-mile limit.

I would hope, if it is legally possible—I am not prepared to discuss whether it is—that this committee would consider not limiting liability under such legislation as you may approve to certainly not the 3-mile limit and not even the 12-mile limit.

ACTS OF GOD

One thing that concerns me even more, and I do not know how much this committee has considered this problem, is the damage resulting from acts of God. Now, as you all know, of course, we have earthquakes in California. The normal earthquake does no damage, to speak of, to the coast. You might have a tidal wave, and perhaps there is minor injury.

Now, I am not proposing that the oil companies, or those shipping oil, be held responsible for acts of God. But I would like to point out that should these wells develop, as they are expected to, and we should have—probably will—oil lines running from several miles out in the ocean into refineries on the coast, should these oil lines, no matter how well built, and beyond the point of negligence on the part of the owners thereof, should they break as a result of an earthquake or some other act of God, and the shoreline of beautiful Santa Barbara be polluted and damaged, it seems to me that there is a reasonable remedy. That would be, and I would hope this committee would give careful consideration to it, the establishment of a trust or insurance fund to be administered by the Secretary of the Interior and to be accumulated at some reasonable rate out of the very considerable royalty revenues being received, and to be received by the Federal Government.

This might be a million dollars a year. It is in a trust fund. It is not going to be spent unless it is needed. But it would fill this vacuum which seems to me might exist in the event of a terribly serious damage situation to the coast line for which the companies themselves, the operators, should not and cannot, it seems to me, be held responsible.

I would hope the committee would give consideration to these points I have mentioned, reasonably briefly, and which are expanded upon to some extent in the written statement I have filed with the committee.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BLATNIK. Congressman, we thank you.

From your background of experience, you are very directly and vitally affected and at times perhaps even threatened, as you indicate.

You raised some very valid points, and the legislation needs to be given very careful consideration. It is going to be a tough problem.

Mr. TEAGUE. It certainly is. It is most tough and complex.

May I ask this: No. 1, Am I correct in assuming that you will not be marking this bill up tomorrow or next week in its final form? Is that a fair assumption?

Mr. BLATNIK. There is a big wad to chew, several wads—a lot of chewing and digesting to do.