

WORLD AND NATION

Senate passes measure to open savings and loans

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Senate early Wednesday morning unanimously approved compromise legislation that lawmakers said could open some of Ohio's 69 closed savings and loan associations later in the day.

Gov. Richard Celeste said he would sign the bill immediately.

Senators approved on a 32-0 vote the amended bill to require the thrifts to drop their private insurance and obtain federal deposit insurance. It had rejected a similar House-approved measure on a 16-16 tie early Tuesday morning.

But the House on Tuesday night approved, 92-0, an amended version that included provisions designed to soothe senators who feared that requiring federal insurance could put some of the S&Ls out of business.

The new version was attached to a Senate bill, approved earlier in the day, which could allow depositors in the institutions to withdraw a portion of their savings.

Senators had said that if the House passed the measure it would be up to savings and loans to decide if they wanted to open on Wednesday to allow the limited withdrawals.

The action came five days after Celeste ordered the institutions closed following a run by depositors triggered by the March 9 closing of Cincinnati-based Home State Savings Bank. Home State closed after it was revealed that it could lose millions in the failure of ESM Government Securities Inc. of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Since then, one Cincinnati-area savings and loan has reopened after obtaining conditional approval for membership in the Federal Savings and Loan Deposit Corp.

The closings of the institutions was one factor in the biggest one-day slide of the dollar in 14 years on international trading markets Tuesday, analysts said. Gold prices soared.

In Washington, meanwhile, Celeste said federal banking officials promised to expedite applications for Ohio savings and loans seeking federal deposit insurance.

Celeste said Federal Home Loan Bank Board Chairman Edwin Gray promised "an unprecedented super-human effort" to bring applying thrifts under federal coverage. Included in this would be a waiver of the normal 10-day waiting period for public comment on applications, Celeste said.

He said he would return to Columbus to lobby in the Senate for the blocked bill, which calls for mandatory federal insurance for the thrifts to reopen.

Funky Winkerbean



Narcotics agent slaying

Judge reviews charges

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — A federal crime court judge continued reviewing evidence Tuesday to determine if a case existed against six Jalisco state judiciary policemen and one former officer accused of kidnapping and murdering an American narcotics agent and his Mexican pilot.

Judge Gonzalo Ballesteros Tena of the 8th District Penal Court had until Tuesday night to decide if the evidence against the seven men merits a trial.

Ballesteros Tena said the seven men were indicted on multiple counts of kidnapping, homicide and illicit dealing in drugs, as well as on a number of lesser charges, including criminal conspiracy, illegal possession military-caliber firearms, and cover-up.

Enrique Camarena Salazar, a special agent for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, was kidnapped Feb. 7 within sight of the U.S. Consulate in Guadalajara by gunmen who forced him into a waiting vehicle.

Alfredo Zavala Avelar, a Mexican Agriculture Department pilot who

worked secretly for Camarena, was abducted on the road to Guadalajara airport a few hours later.

Their badly-beaten bodies were found March 5 at a ranch 60 miles east of Guadalajara, a city 322 miles northwest of Mexico City.

According to Ballesteros Tena, the seven "are charged to a greater or lesser degree," with homicide, kidnapping and drug-trafficking but that the severity of the charges will be determined later.

Under Mexican law, a judge has 72 hours from the time a person is formally remanded into his custody to decide if the evidence shows the accused can be "presumed responsible" for the crimes.

If a case exists, the judge has a year to hear the evidence and reach a verdict.

The seven men were remanded by the Attorney General's office into the custody of the 8th Penal Court on Saturday, when formal charges were read to them.

At an arraignment hearing at the capital's East-Side jail on Sunday, all seven rejected the accusations, including signed confessions which they claimed were forced out of

them under duress. They claimed they were beaten, tortured and forced to sign the pre-written confessions, kept without food and not allowed to call their lawyers or families while in police custody.

After criticizing Mexican authorities for weeks for being too slow in pressing an investigation into the murders, top U.S. officials this week praised the Mexican government for the arrests.

The "Camarena Case," as it is known here, has put a strain on Mexican-American relations.

Mexico was angered by exhaustive border searches last month, which the United States said were put in effect to find clues on Camarena's whereabouts, but which were interpreted as a form of public pressure on Mexico to find Camarena and bring the murderers to justice.

Meanwhile, the Attorney General's office here said authorities have issued several more arrest warrants in the case, including one for Rafael Caro Quintero, a reputed drug kingpin who was spirited out of Guadalajara last month.

Lebanese forces, Christians battle Moslems in rebellion

Associated Press

SIDON, Lebanon — Lebanese army forces and Christian militiamen who joined the revolt against President Amin Gemayel battled Tuesday with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns in this southern Lebanese city.

Police and hospital sources said at least five people were killed, including two soldiers. At least 39 people were reported wounded, including nine soldiers and 30 civilians.

Fighting started Monday in Sidon between Shiite and Sunni Moslem militiamen and the Christian Lebanese Forces who have rebelled against the Gemayel leadership. The army moved in to stop the fighting and became involved.

The sound of explosions and heavy machine-gun fire could be heard across the city, the provincial capital of south Lebanon. Families fled the Christian-held areas during the shooting. Schools and shops were closed throughout the city.

The fighting in Sidon started after Christian militia garrisons in the predominantly Moslem city joined the rebellion led by Lebanese Forces commander Samir Geagea.

Geagea and his supporters last week took control of most of the Christian areas north of Beirut to challenge the pro-Syrian policies of Gemayel. The president is head of the Christian Phalange Party.

The rebellion in the Christian camp posed a no threat to Gemayel who has been trying to prevent fighting between Lebanon's Christians and Moslems. Prime Minister Rashid Karami has warned that the revolt could force Gemayel to resign and cause resumption of civil war in the country.

Syria, which backs Gemayel, has moved troops and armored vehicles to the fringe of the Christian area north of Beirut.

Syrian officials have accused Israel of inspiring the rebellion to try to sabotage Syrian efforts to restore peace in Lebanon. Lebanese soldiers in Sidon said the Christians were responsible for the continued fighting.

The Lebanese army moved into the Sidon area Feb. 16 after the Israeli army pulled out in the first step of a three-stage plan to end its occupation of south Lebanon. Israeli leaders had warned at the time that they expected Moslem-Christian confrontations after their departure.

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