

# Solution to Gulf spill is in Mexican courts

United Press International  
**MONTERREY, Mexico** — Mexico's government-owned oil company, PEMEX, will not consider paying for damages from the Ixtoc I oil spill unless ordered to do so by a Mexican court, the director of the company says.

The statement by PEMEX Director Gen. Jorge Diaz Serrano strongly implied PEMEX may ignore any judgment handed down by U.S. courts over the June 3, 1979 blowout that stained South Texas beaches, wreaking havoc on the area's multi-million dollar tourist industry.

"Any claim made against PEMEX should be within Mexican law and courts of Mexico," Diaz Serrano said. "We have not received any claims of this nature in Mexico."

Diaz Serrano made the statements to reporters Saturday during a two-day series of meetings between Gov. Bill Clements and Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo.

His statements added to the dispute concerning liability over the blowout, the world's worst oil spill.

Contending Mexican courts are the only proper channels for filing oil spill damage claims since PEMEX is a branch of the Mexican government, Diaz Serrano said the firm would take no position on its possible liability until it is formally challenged and a suit filed in Mexico.

Before departing for Texas, Clements declined comments on Diaz Serrano's statements. But he repeated an earlier statement that Mexico ultimately may be forced to assume responsibility for the oil spill damages.

"Mexico will provide some sort of response," he said. "Just be patient."

PEMEX already has been threatened with a lawsuit by SEDCO, its co-defendant in U.S. damage suits seeking nearly \$500,000 in restitution due damage to Texas beaches.

Founded and formerly controlled by Clements, SEDCO has served notice it intends to file a third-party lawsuit to shift damage liability to PEMEX and PEMARCO, a Mexican-owned drilling firm which operated the renegade well using SEDCO equipment.

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# Grand jury slated to quiz Clayton today about Brilab

United Press International  
**HOUSTON** — House Speaker Bill Clayton, determined to risk the possibility of an indictment in a bid to salvage his political career, was scheduled to go before a federal grand jury today pledging to answer all questions about a \$5000 "cash contribution" given to him by a union official.

Clayton's attorneys tried to convince him to invoke his constitutional privilege to remain silent, but the House Speaker balked at a step many suggested would be political suicide.

"He's planning to answer the questions," said George Works, press secretary.

Clayton, 51, has denied any wrongdoing in interviews with reporters and said his only concern at testifying under oath is that federal prosecutors might trick him into making some false statement about what happened during a Nov. 8 meeting in his Capitol office with Houston labor leader L.G. Moore and a man posing as an insurance company representative.

The Texas legislative leader is one target of the FBI Brilab investigation of alleged bribery of union and government officials.

Clayton said Moore introduced Joseph Hauser, a convicted felon turned FBI informant, to him as a Prudential Insurance Co. representative seeking assistance in obtaining an \$80,000 contract for insurance on state employees.

Moore left a \$5,000 cash contribution on the desk at the close of the meeting in Clayton's Capitol office. Clayton said he ordered the money put away for safekeeping, intending to return it to Moore at a later time but never got around to it.

The speaker's attorneys invited reporters to witness the counting of the \$100 bills taken from an envelope in an assistant's desk drawer and said the cash will be turned over to federal officials in Houston.

# School lowers standards, hoping dropouts will stop

United Press International  
**PRINCETON, Texas** — Officials at Princeton High School, where 26 percent of the student body flunked courses last fall, have decided to lower academic standards to keep students from becoming discouraged.

At a time when school districts across the country are raising standards to make sure that Johnny actually can read when he graduates from high school, the Princeton Independent School District decided to do the reverse — in hopes of reducing its dropout rate.

High school principal Frank Garner said he recommended the school board approve lowering the passing grade from 70 to 65 to keep those students in school who drop out in the sophomore year because they are not passing enough courses to become juniors.

Garner said roughly 15 to 30 pupils in the 270-member student body drop out near the end of the sophomore year.

"This is to help the marginal student whose grades run in the 65 to 69 range most of the time," he said. "These students are not discipline problems. They're giving us the best they can."

"The response from the student body is real good, but you'd expect that," Garner said.

# New act aided state's gas production, exports

United Press International  
**DALLAS** — State statistics indicate the nation's new natural gas act, anathema to oilmen and challenged in court by four gas producing states, helped reverse a six-year decline in Texas gas production last year.

Figures released by the Texas Railroad Commission also indicated the act allowed massive amounts of Texas gas to be exported to other states.

Exports of Texas-produced gas increased 45 percent in 1979, the first year the Natural Gas Policy Act was in effect. Before the act, gas exports had declined each year since 1971.

The additional gas flowing from Texas to other parts of the country was sufficient to replace 400,000 barrels of oil a day, about 2 percent of total U.S. consumption.

Before the act was passed, Texas gas shipped out of state was subject to a federal price ceiling of \$1.50 per thousand cubic feet. Gas produced and sold within the state was not subject to price controls and sold for \$2 or more.

Because producers did not want to sell for the lower price, a glut of gas built up in Texas and other producing states, while consuming states experienced shortages.

The act ended the distinction between intrastate and interstate gas prices.

Texas joined Oklahoma, Louisiana and Wyoming in challenging the act in federal court.

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