

## Texas City last 'like one in 1947'

# Document fraud increase expected with new INS rules

By Sondra Pickard  
Senior Staff Writer

Immigration officials are preparing for an increase in fraudulent documents helping illegal aliens in the United States take advantage of the new immigration law, a Texas Immigration and Naturalization Service official said.

Mario Ortiz, director of the regional INS office in Dallas, said that because illegal aliens can't apply for amnesty under the law until May 4, 1987, the INS hasn't seen any significant increase in the use of bogus documents, although the problem will worsen in the future.

"We expect an increase in the potential of document fraud," Ortiz said, "but it isn't really all that prevalent at this time."

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 was passed by Congress in October and signed into law by President Reagan early last month.

Under its most controversial provision, employers will be subject to fines of from \$250 to \$10,000 for each illegal alien they hire, and will be responsible for checking birth

certificates or passports of prospective workers.

Another provision will allow temporary foreign farm workers to apply for permanent legal status if they have worked in U.S. agriculture for at least 90 days in the year before May 1986.

But of most concern to the INS is the provision that grants amnesty to illegal aliens who can show that they have lived continuously in the United States since Jan. 1, 1982 — a provision that may benefit as many as 8 million people.

The INS, which has authority for implementing the changes, has not yet announced how the new regulations will work, but most of the major provisions, including amnesty and employer penalties, will not go into effect for six months. Ortiz said this part of the law gives the INS ample time to develop implementation regulations and forms, and to set up additional offices.

"Since it's next to impossible to get an accurate determination of the number of illegal aliens in the country," Ortiz said, "we don't have an accurate count of those who might qualify for legalization, although we

expect hundreds of thousands."

Between now and May, Ortiz said the INS will embark on a public education campaign geared both to employers and illegal aliens to tell them about the documents and records required for verification.

Ortiz said the INS intends to prosecute vigorously anyone who tries to obtain legal status by fraud, and that it specifically will be on the lookout for bad documents.

To implement the law, the INS was authorized an extra \$442 million for fiscal 1987 and \$419 million for 1988 — on top of its current \$600 million budget.

The law also calls for an increase in INS personnel, Ortiz said, adding 300 to 400 additional immigration investigators or "special agents," and increasing the number of U.S. border patrols by 50 percent.

"We know that there's a potential for document fraud," he said. "We're going to be devising systems to detect it and we're definitely going to prosecute. If there's someone using bad documents, that means there's someone out there producing them — and we're out to stop it."

TEXAS CITY (AP) — Some witnesses say the intensity of a blast that killed one man Tuesday reminded them of the 1947 Texas City disaster which a series of violent explosions and fires aboard ships demolished the city.

"There was so much smoke," said Elkins, maintenance superintendent for nearby Reagent Chemical. "I was 5 years old when we had the 1947 disaster. This one looked just as bad as that one did."

The 1947 disaster occurred when a ship loaded with ammonium nitrate fertilizer exploded and was followed the next day by an explosion on another ship. The accident left 10 injured, 461 dead, 115 missing and caused \$67 million in property damage.

On Tuesday, a railroad tank car loaded in a petroleum storage tank, setting off a chain reaction that killed four other tank cars, ruptured pipelines and set fire to a nearby storage tank, authorities said.

About 100 firefighters from Texas City, Galveston and local industrial fire departments battled the fire Tuesday at the Stan-Trans Inc. propane distribution terminal in Texas City, officials said. The U.S. Coast Guard hosed down some sections of the pier.

The body of Tommy Rivers, 46, was found in the twisted wreckage after the fire was controlled, according to Texas City Fire Marshal Sam Dawidowicz. Rivers was an employee at Stan-Trans, which distributes material along the coast, Stan-Trans manager George Reese said.

An investigation of the explosion is under way.

The car that exploded contained a toxic chemical used in manufacturing plastics, Texas City Chief Roy McKinney said. The tank cars that burned and a storage tank that was damaged also contained some butadiene, he said.

South Texas hospital can be sued in death of former Houston Oiler

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that a South Texas hospital can be sued for refusing treatment to a former Houston Oiler who died en route to another hospital.

Don Floyd, 42, died of a heart attack May 9, 1980, after suffering chest pains while driving from Houston to McAllen with Frances Farrell, his fiancée. Farrell initially took Floyd to the Raymondville hospital, but a nurse there, following a

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doctor's orders, told Farrell that Floyd could not be treated because he did not have a local physician and because the hospital's cardiac care equipment was in use.

The nurse sent Farrell and Floyd to Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen, but Floyd died en route.

The high court, without writing an opinion, upheld a Corpus Christi Court of Appeals decision that ordered a trial of the lawsuit filed by Floyd's survivors.

The Corpus Christi appeals court in February overruled State District Judge Darrell Hester of Brownsville, who decided that the Willacy County Hospital District had governmental immunity against such suits.

The suit does not request a specific amount of damages.

Also sued by the family were the nurse and doctor who sent Floyd to the Harlingen hospital. Ezell said Wednesday that those suits have been settled out of court.

## Bennett raps Reagan backers for Iran silence

DALLAS (AP) — Past supporters of Reagan administration foreign policy were criticized Wednesday by U.S. Education Secretary William Bennett for failing to rally to the president's side in the controversy over the sale of weapons to Iran.

"There are many people for whom Ronald Reagan has done a great deal," Bennett told a Dallas news conference. "I don't hear as much from them as I think we should all be hearing."

Bennett declined to direct his criticism at anyone specifically.

"Those people know who they are," he said.

On another topic, Bennett downplayed a new report by an education review group citing the declining writing skills of American students.

"The picture is still mixed," Bennett said, not-

ing improvements in some standardized test scores of reading and other skills.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress report described writing samples from 55,000 students nationwide as inadequate except in response to the simplest of tasks.

The education secretary applauded his expertise was not in foreign policy, but described himself as a student of Washington and a member of this administration.

He applauded Reagan's response to the controversy in calling for an independent counsel to investigate the secret dealings with Iran and the diversion of money to Nicaraguan rebel forces.

Bennett said Reagan is prepared to do just about "anything that anyone can reasonably ask for."

Bennett was to speak to the Dallas Rotary Club and planned to meet with businessman H. Ross Perot. But Bennett said the conversation would likely deal with Perot's efforts to improve education and not Iran.

The billionaire Texan has acknowledged previous dealings with Marine Lt. Col. Oliver L. North, who was ousted as a National Security Council adviser for his role in the Iranian weapons sale.

Perot has said he worked earlier this year with North in a bid to ransom four Americans then held in Lebanon.

Questioned about the report card on students' writing skills, Bennett conceded that, "Writing has been bad for some time." He also said the teaching of science needed improvement.

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