Statehouse sidelights . . .

# Politics played role in task force report

Wed Dec. 19, 1979

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Politics appears to have played a key role in the governor's task force report on radioactive waste disposals which recommended they be stopped but, significantly, set no deadline.

**Radioactive experts at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory pointed out the report was contradictory, since it recommended stopping the waste disposal dumping but hastened to add there is "no immediate health hazard."**

Studied in its context, the report conveys the main meaning that Gov. John V. Evans and the committee voice displeasure at the dumping, but mostly for political purposes.

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**Investigation shows the committee members apparently were swayed by the governor's earlier remarks when he predicted the task force would find the practices unacceptable and that they should be phased out, then hastened to add he did not want to pre-judge the action.**

However, confidential reports showed the task force members were influenced by the governor's statement.

The committee was headed by two of the governor's department directors, Stephen Allred, of Water Resources, and Milton Klein, of Health and Welfare, who would naturally heed the governor's wishes.

**It was Allred who was the instigating force in the deliberation to come out with a strong report against the dumping, said some committee members.**

There was no minority report, but those less than enthusiastic about the report pointed out no time schedule was set and the report thus is of little value.

None of the seven members of the task force have any radioactive management experience. The only one with any expertise was Jay Kunze, Idaho Falls, a nuclear expert but who is not one for radioactive management.

A statement also by Lt. Gov. Philip E. Batt threatened an injunction to stop the disposal practices.

**It's painfully obvious the ou standing radioactiv management expert in th state, who was not named, wa Ammon Mayor George Wel mann. He had worked i radioactive management an environment at the INEL for 2 years, the last seven as directo of the radioactive managemen program until his retiremen last year.**

Inquiries urging his appoint ment drew this response fror the governor's office: "H knows too much," according t confidential sources.

**Wehmann acknowledges h would not have gone with the recommendations, which he considers of little value, anyway.**

Wehmann points out the INEL has the most sophisiticated closed loop disposal system in the state. He said in his opinion it is actually more hazardous to dispense tritium in the air, as some propose, rather than in the ground.

A closed cycle loop, he explains, keeps the water in constant circulation, but it eventually must be disposed of elsewhere.

The fact that INEL personnel drink the aquifer water at the Central Facilities area which is located three miles downstream from the Chemical Processing Plant where the so-called contamination takes place would indicate there is insignificant

**A survey of East Idaho legislators show full backing for the INEL.**

On another related matter, for example, they express strong opposition to the proposal of Rep. Jim Golder, R-Boise, to ban radioactive shipments into the state and back the proposed memorial of Rep. C. Wendell Miller, D-Idaho Falls, the only legislator employed at the INEL, asking Congress and the Department of Energy to permit continuance of such shipments if they are carefully handled. (This appears in another story on this page.)

Many agree the state should have independent monitoring.

Dr. Lee Stokes, administrator of the Environment Division of the Department of Health and Welfare, has recommended this and asks the federal government for funding to the state for independent monitoring. Dr. Stokes estimates $60,000 will be needed.

**U.S. Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, took one of the most significant steps in spearheading a bill already passed by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee of which he is the ranking majority member.**

This measure would require the federal government to take over the job of storing spent fuel-rods and other high-level waste from commercial nuclear breeders, and charging utilities for the service; requiring that such a long-range plan be submitted in a year; and requiring the secretary of energy to submit within 120 days recommendations on how the federal government can help states deal with the problems of nuclear waste disposal.

Post-Register/don Skitt

*Idaho water leaders*

**TWO IDAHO LEGISLATORS who will have a key hand in considering any legislation in the 1980 Idaho Legislature regarding the Snake River aquifer are Rep. Vard Chatburn, left, R-Albion, chairman of the House Resources and Conservation Committee; and Sen. J. Marsden Williams, R-Idaho Falls, chairman of the Senate Resources and Environment Committee. Both are strong supporters of water development projects and members of a Legislative Interim Committee on Water Problems.**