

Willard C. Franks
GEOLOGY - OIL OPERATOR
BOX 144
BRIGGSDALE, COLO.

May 17, 1965

3374

RE: LaRoe No. 1 Well
SE/4NW/4 Sec. 19
Twp. 27 North
Range 22 E. NMPM

Mr. J. E. Kapetina
Oil Conservation Commission
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Kapetina:

I had your letter of May 10, 1965 when I came home and it left me feeling very depressed and discouraged regarding the subject well which I hope that you will not force me to plug and abandon.

Last year I paid out \$4,200.00 to move a rig in and out before the main sand body had been penetrated, when I learned that the contractor was using a 6" blowout preventor above a 7-7/8" bit that was being used to ream the hole. This posed a dangerous situation in the event that we struck a heavy head of gas when the sand was penetrated, as I am certain will be the case. The pictures which I took of the gas burning from the well even at this point would indicate it. To remove a blowout preventor to clear the hole of pipe and bit would be a hazard that I would not dare risk. In fact, I was so incensed that I fired the contractor immediately.

After moving this rig out I contacted another rig which agreed to move in if I would assure the drilling of a second well, so I sent a plugging bond to your commission covering the offsetting location as I am sure of a highly productive well there, but I could not go ahead and escrow \$10,000.00 with a drilling contract covering a well for which I had no permit, although I was to complete the No. 1 well first. (I have no doubt of a highly productive well in the LaRoe No. 1 with perhaps no more than ten feet to go to production.)

I again found a rig that would move in from Liberal, Kansas but the cold weather struck and the crew would not come so far just for three or four days work without extra pay for away-from-home living. The contractor backed out.

Finally, I went to E. R. Sanman of Springer, New Mexico, who had drilled for me before but at the time had two jobs to do, one on the large Red River Ranch getting their wells and windmills in

shape for another year and two wells to drill on a ranch at Wagon Mound, before he could come up and finish my LaRoe well as he is planning to do just as quickly as he finishes his contract with the Wagon Mound rancher, the Red River job having been finished. The severe winter weather and illness in his family delayed his work until the weather broke so while I was waiting for him to move on location and finish my LaRoe well I came home and drilled a 7200' test in Adams County, Colorado. The rig is moving on location to drill another test for me within the next few days, but the actual drilling will require not more than ten days with good luck.

I have not been able to tell you anything definite about the date that Mr. Sanman would move in because he couldn't know, but he is to move in on completion of his present program at Wagon Mound.

I trust that you can favor me by granting me just enough time to have Mr. Sanman move up and finish the well for which I left 2000' of $\frac{3}{4}$ " cable for him to use. I want to finish that well more than any well I have ever drilled and even though I have been disappointed more in contractors on this well than on all of the other wells combined I have ever drilled, I still place the importance of this drilling above all other drilling that I have in mind.

The well has heavy mud in it for protection and there is no water at all in the entire depth, --none. The well is properly protected by cap and I want to prove that there is oil in the Raton Basin and that this well will be the first to produce.

If there is any way that you could suggest in way of added security that this well will be completed, I would gladly provide it. If you insist that the well be plugged I shall have to have Mr. Sanman move his rig up to do it anyhow, and with this well going down here I don't see how I could possibly go to New Mexico on the 25th and leave this drilling wild. I sit on this well myself, check samples and see that the drilling contract is complied with which is very important.

After the LaRoe well is assured of production I plan to buy a rig of my own solely for New Mexico as there are two structures there that must be drilled. Each should have from 18 to 20 wells on them if the LaRoe No. 1 is productive as I am confident it will be. Had I not been confident I would have been out of the country two years ago and thus saved the money that we have spent there. My wife and I alone have more than \$7,000.00 in this LaRoe well besides all of the time I have spent there. It will be worth every dollar and every hour of time spent.

- 3 -

If you insist that I plug the well I trust that you will grant me enough time to get this present undertaking out of the way here as I don't see how I can leave this well while in the process of drilling. However, I want to prove the Raton Basin even if I have to buy a rig to complete this first well should such be necessary.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Willard B. Smith". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Willard B. Smith".

Enc. - 2