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Press statement: Shell offshore drilling programme

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PRESS STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER (MR. DUNSTAN)SHELL OFFSHORE DRILLING PROGRAMME

4/8/71.

A new oil drilling programme is to start off the South Australian coast by the end of this year the Premier and Minister for Mines (Mr. Dunstan) announced today.

Mr. Dunstan said that Mr. Jack C. Threet, General Manager, Exploration and Production, of the Shell Group of Companies had advised him that the semi-submersible rig, "Ocean Digger" is expected to be towed into position in December and that a two-well drilling programme would start almost immediately. The "Ocean Digger", which was built in South Australia's Whyalla shipyards and which is currently drilling in North Western Australian waters, will be released by Burmah/Shell/Woodside-Mid-Eastern for the South Australian programme.

The first site to be drilled is in the Great Australian Bight, 78 miles south west of Port Lincoln and 210 miles west of Adelaide. It will be known as Platypus 1 and is in one of five permit areas, covering 50,000 square miles held by Shell Development (Australia) Pty. Ltd. When drilling is completed at Platypus 1 "Ocean Digger" is expected to move to Emu 1, 70 miles east and carry out a second drilling programme.

It is the first time any company has drilled for oil in the Great Australian Bight.

Water depth at the selected sites is between 450 and 550 feet and is the deepest encountered by an Australian operator. Since Shell was first granted the permit areas in 1966, the company has spent 2.6M. in carrying out geophysical survey programmes.

Company chartered aircraft have logged 6,500 miles in aeromagnetic surveys. About 9,000 miles of regional and detailed seismic programmes have also been completed.

Platypus 1 and Emu 1 have been selected as initial drilling targets in the two-well programme following the outcome of these surveys.

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Mr. Dunstan said that Shell will establish its main operating and communications base plus a helicopter service point at Port Lincoln.

Some services connected with the drilling programme will be provided through Adelaide.

Mr. Dunstan added that supplies from overseas earmarked for the drilling operations, would start arriving in Adelaide from early in September.
