

Released Cuban political prisoners return to U.S.

MIAMI (UPI) — Forty-seven Cuban political prisoners allowed to leave the communist island began immigration processing in Miami yesterday after a boisterous reunion with thousands of cheering friends and relatives. Cuban Premier Fidel Castro said he may release others by the end of the year. "I have already freed between 12,000 and 14,000 political prisoners," Castro told reporters Saturday. "I hope it is possible to free the rest of

the political prisoners by the end of the year." No one knows precisely how many political prisoners are in Cuba, but Castro said he holds about 3,000. He said only those prisoners who have "committed very serious crimes," including murder, will be refused permission to immigrate. Many of the freed 47 political prisoners said they will devote most of their time toward freeing the men "we left behind."

"The most important thing for me to do now that I am free," Tony Cuesta, the best-known prisoner in the group, said "is to work for the release of the people we left behind." Cuesta, 51, spent 12 years in Castro's prisons after being captured during an attempted commando raid in 1966. He was blinded and lost his left arm in the raid. The crowd awaiting the newly arrived prisoners at Dade County Auditorium Saturday

gave their loudest cheer as Cuesta, guided by his new wife, Carmen, stepped off the first of two buses carrying the arrivals. When Cuesta walked into the auditorium, the crowd started singing the Cuban national anthem. Cheers of joy were sounded as each of the 47 prisoners — and 33 members of their families — stepped off the buses. They walked into the auditorium and across a stage with a 30-foot-high American flag draped across the wall.

"This dialogue is strictly between Cubans — the Cuban community abroad and us, not the U.S. government," Castro said. "I do this for humanitarian reasons and as a gesture of good will." Castro admitted one reason he took the initiative was because the Carter administration has changed its policies towards Cuba. "They've stopped sending spy planes over Cuba and lifted a ban on travel to Cuba," he said.

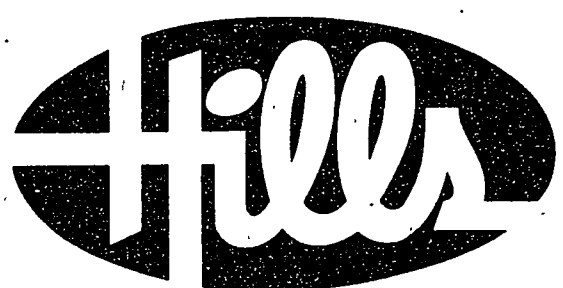
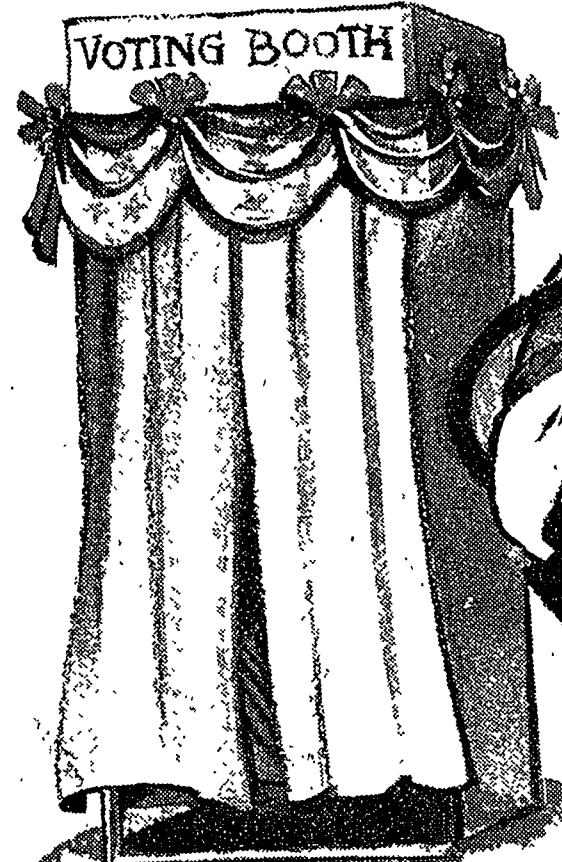
Iraq will ask for oil price hike

BEIRUT, Lebanon (UPI) — Iraq, citing Western inflation and the decline of the U.S. dollar, says it will seek a minimum 25-percent hike in oil prices at the next OPEC meeting in December. But Information Minister Saad Kassem Hammoudi, in an indication a compromise is likely with moderate OPEC members like Saudi Arabia, said "We will make sure to come out with a unanimous decision which will preserve the unity of OPEC." Hammoudi, in an interview published yesterday by the Beirut magazine Monday Morning, said prices set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, frozen for nearly 18 months at \$12.70 a barrel, must be increased. "The value of the dollar is continuing to drop, reducing its buying power and our revenues," he said. "The prices of the goods we are importing from the industrial countries are also continuing to rise." He said Iraq will "demand an increase after this long period of price-freeze. Iraq intends to propose a minimum oil-price increase of 25 percent." Hammoudi said "the consumer countries of Western Europe, the United States, Japan and other nations" were responsible for any price hike in OPEC crude because they were continuing to raise the prices of their exports. Reflecting increasing pressure for a price increase, Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani — a key force in keeping prices down — said last week a hike at the December meeting in Abu Dhabi would not be surprising. Oil industry sources in Beirut believed Saudi Arabia, by far the largest and most influential OPEC exporter, would work hard to keep such an increase well below 25 percent. A 5-percent to 10-percent hike has been mentioned as a likely figure.

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