

fields that contribute, we believe, to the better possibility of a solution now.

I am not a technologist, and perhaps I should be letting Dr. Gartrell answer the question, but I did want to make the point that we recognized this was a problem that required solution, and we do as a policy matter intend to do whatever we can about it.

Dr. GARTRELL. Although we suspended actual research in the field, we have maintained our interest in the subject and have kept alert to possible breakthroughs in technology that might provide a practical answer, but the facts in the case were that the power system was expanding rapidly and we needed to have answers at the time, and we realized that the development of practical methods for removal of SO_2 from stack gases was a long-term proposition. And meanwhile, our experience with the higher stacks, as I indicated before, was then and has continued from plant to plant to be very favorable.

Mr. BELL. How much of the sulfur dioxide, which is emitted into the air through the high stacks is washed out of the air and how much of it stays there? Do you have any idea on that?

Dr. GARTRELL. There have been some efforts to try to make an inventory of sulfur compounds in the worldwide atmosphere, and according to the best calculations that we know about there is no indication of any buildup of sulfur compounds or SO_2 in the atmosphere, indicating that the processes for removal are balancing out even the increased emissions.

Mr. BELL. Mr. Chairman, I have another question a little slightly different from this, on the pollution problem.

Some of your plants use coal, and some use oil, or gas. Which fuel represents the largest pollution problem?

Dr. GARTRELL. My experience has been limited to coal-fired powerplants. Gas is a relatively clean fuel. It has the least sulfur in it of any fossil fuel that is available. The sulfur content in oil varies as widely as it does in coal.

Mr. BELL. Yes; I understand that. But I assumed you would use the lightest type that has less sulfur in it.

One other question, Mr. Chairman. I understand you are considering the use of nuclear power in your plants. Is that correct?

Mr. WAGNER. That is correct. We have contracted for a nuclear plant.

Mr. BELL. Does that represent a problem in this area?

Mr. WAGNER. Not a problem in air pollution, no, sir.

Mr. BELL. Would there be a sizable waste problem?

Mr. WAGNER. No waste problems that aren't solvable.

Let me ask you, Frank, to respond further.

Dr. GARTRELL. With regard to nuclear powerplants and the nuclear industry in general, that is one instance in which the technology for handling the waste products, both liquid and atmospheric waste products—that technology was developed concurrently with the development of the basic technology.

The developers recognized that they had a material that had to be handled with great care, so from the very beginning the work in the nuclear field has included attention to problems of waste disposal.

Mr. BELL. Then you would say that more of your plants will be using nuclear energy in the future. Is that what we should look forward to?