Mr. ASPINALL. Mr. Secretary, the report concludes that detailed studies will establish the feasibility of augmenting the river by desalting. Don't you believe that before we conduct feasibility studies of augmentation by desalting, we must at least have reconnaissance studies of all other possible means for augmentation?

Secretary UDALL. I would agree with that. I think the proper thing to do, Mr. Chairman, is to look at the economics of various alternatives. After all, this is a projection, it is an extrapolation. Let's see how the big Bolsa Island-southern California plant works. Let's see what the next generation of desalting plant looks like. We will know more 10 years from now than we do today.

Mr. ASPINALL. In this connection, I am bothered by the language in the reconnaissance report leaving the impression that we must await some word from a National Water Commission before there can be a study of the possibility of importing water from outside of the basin.

There is no National Water Commission and no assurance that there will be at this time, is there, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary UDALL. There is no assurance. I am optimistic that I can get the two bodies of Congress together sometime during this session on this issue.

Mr. ASPINALL. The chairman of the full committee was criticized because around the first of last June, we had not proceeded. Now we have passed the bill and they have had it over in the other body ever since last August. It seems there is no intent over there to pass it.

As you know, I have never been enthusiastic about the National Water Commission or the values that might accrue from its establishment, but I didn't oppose it. I have gone along with the legislation in hope that it might be useful in solving this Nation's water problems. But I tell you that it is not a National Water Commission that is going to make the policy decisions as to whether importations from other basins are appropriate augmentation sources for study purposes. This is the implication left by the language in the report. The Congress of the United States is going to make this determination and we are not going to take water from other basins simply because the National Water Commission says we should and we are not going to keep from taking water from other basins simply because the Water Commission, the proposed National Water Commission, says that we shouldn't. This is a question that will be worked out by agreement among the States as to what the studies will show will be feasible.

Would you agree with that statement?

Secretary UDALL. Mr. Chairman, I have no quarrel with your basic point, which is that the Congress is going to make the final decisions. I must say I think the improvements that the House committee put in the bill to establish a National Water Commission are very important improvements. I think the House bill is the better vehicle. I believe a National Water Commission could give guidance to the Nation for the kind of national action that may be needed in the future and could help make the case for the right kind of programs, whatever they are. That has been my real hope for a National Water Commission.

But the Congress and the Executive, in their usual way, are going to make the decisions; yes.