

ment. Point 1 of the five-point program, announced on January 27, 1967, states that "Pending sodium preference right lease applications will be promptly considered on their merits." We appreciate this. We are anxious to resume core drilling on a larger scale to obtain more dawsonite both for our own use and that of the Bureau of Mines, with whom we anticipate cooperating closely. We seek no special rights or privileges and have applied for standard form 4-1134 (March 1964) leases. Our only comment on point 1 is that we believe the most careful consideration should be given to the question whether or not sodium should be returned to withdrawn status. If Executive Order 5327 of April 5, 1930 had not been modified to permit the search for sodium minerals, we would not be where we are today. We suggest that reverting to withdrawn status may deter rather than encourage exploration.

It is understood that a number of companies are interested in the "blocking up" provision of point 2, so we will not comment on them. Our lease applications are not involved.

Point 3 appears to foreshadow an entirely new relationship between the Government and interested companies. If it means there will be individually negotiated contracts between the Department of Interior and each interested company, it appears that we are moving away from the time-tested provisions of the leasing law to what may be a very difficult administrative task.

We also do not believe industry can be expected to undertake the research—to say nothing of the infinitely more costly development—without the firm commitment of a lease. Certainly such a lease could be revocable if the lessee did not produce, but its issuance must be assured. We also feel that this whole area is too new to permit requiring a company to "describe the process sought to be developed." This is the antithesis of research. Our own approach would be to undertake the job of developing our present process or finding a new process without starting with preconceptions, fixed plans, et cetera. We believe in confronting today's problems with tomorrow's technology.

On point 4 we welcome the enthusiasm and know-how of the Atomic Energy Commission and its associated private companies. We are fortunate that the development of clean weapons systems permits the use of atomic explosions for such peaceful purposes as this. Other *in situ* processes should be pursued simultaneously, just as one form of mining should not prevent the investigation of another—for example, we anticipate one method of mining evolving into another.

On point 5 we certainly agree with the objectives but we are not sure what is meant by "Some of these research projects will involve close cooperation etc." We feel the issue of where and under whose management the research is to be done should be faced now. This is an age-old problem—"in-house research." We suggest it is in the national interest to attract industry's best research institutions and to avoid any single-source direction of the research. The chairman (Senator Jackson) of this committee, however, has had so much experience and success in generating good research that we need make no comment.

More research will be needed. The amount of funds which will become available for this will depend on the Government's policy decision on the relative importance of developing these minerals.