

STATEMENT OF MAX N. EDWARDS, ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR AND LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL, NOMINEE FOR OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, Senator Muskie, as always it is a pleasure to appear before this committee.

I do not have a prepared statement. I thought it might be presumptuous on my part in such a short period of time to indicate that I might have found all of the problems which I know I am going to be confronted with, or any definitive answers about the magnitude of the problem.

Essentially my early background in the law is that of a country lawyer, I suppose. I practiced law in Hobbs, N. Mex., from 1950 until 1960. I was the prosecuting attorney for 2 years. In 1959, I was general counsel to the New Mexico State Senate.

Since I have been with Secretary Udall, I have been assistant to the Secretary and legislative counsel. My division has been responsible for implementing the Department's legislative program and, in effect handling the legislation for more than 20 separate bureaus.

I have developed a keen, and I think, devoted interest in the development and conservation of our natural resources. I am concerned over what I consider one of the most acute problems of a domestic nature that this country faces; that is, the wise and proper development of our water resources. I think we all agree that this is an area where we are now paying for the sins of the past. I think it is high time, since we do have the legislative and scientific tools, that we get busy and do something about correcting these things; that we indeed move forward with an aggressive campaign to clean up the polluted rivers, lakes, and streams of the country and that we keep them clean.

The CHAIRMAN. Does that complete your statement?

Mr. EDWARDS. These are my off-the-cuff remarks; yes, sir. I might just add that I consider this new opportunity to be a genuine challenge and that I will look forward to it if the Senate confirms me.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to ask you a question with reference to legislation passed recently providing for the dual purpose facility in connection with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California on Bolsa Island.

We know this is a cooperative project involving not only the Office of Saline Water and the Atomic Energy Commission but also the Metropolitan Water District and, of course, municipally owned and privately owned utilities.

What do you feel should be the Federal role in this kind of joint venture?

Mr. EDWARDS. Senator Jackson, I think that this is the very keen result of the program that the Congress first directed in 1952 to be carried out by the Office of Saline Water in the Department of the Interior.

I think that this is the ultimate goal. I predicate this upon the scientific assumptions that we will be producing water at a cost of from 22 to 25 cents for 1,000 gallons.