

Back in 1959, Doctor, I introduced a bill, and a similar bill is now pending in the Congress, which is simply to establish a minerals policy in the United States. I don't think anybody can say today that we have a minerals policy. If we have it has more facets than any diamond that has ever been cut. It is almost impossible to tell what it is. I don't know whether we are trying to follow the old Paley theory or not. I don't know whether our national policy is to promote the production of minerals in this country upon an economically viable basis, or whether it is our intention to tap the world's resources as far as we can.

The present bill is S. 522. It was introduced in January of 1967. We requested department reports on February 2, 1967. These requests were renewed on August 25, 1967, and on February 3, 1968. To date, no reports whatever have been received on that bill.

Now, I happen to believe that this bill, if enacted, would be the broad base from which we could start legislating to develop a sounder minerals industry in this country, particularly in the production field, and that unless we say what our mineral policy is going to be, we are going to keep on flubbing around—and that is as good a word as anything, just flubbing around—for a long, long time.

Now, can you explain to me why there has been no report on this bill from the Department of Interior? Even though they say "We don't like it," why haven't we had something from them?

Dr. HIBBARD. May I comment on that, sir?

Senator ALLOTT. Yes; I am asking the question.

Dr. HIBBARD. I am not prepared to comment on the status of the comments on the bill. But it is with the thought in mind that strategic planning requires that information be brought in in a concise way to those who make policy as a basis for establishing whatever policy is needed to cover the issues which emerge from these studies. This is one of the reasons why I am here today, because I believe that the information which we are going to present this morning will show a clear need for some firm statements of policy.

I happen to believe personally that while no additional authority is required by the Secretary or the Bureau to carry out some of the things that need to be done, that it is highly desirable to focus the attention of the country on the need for new minerals technology. As in the past where you have focused this need by the passage of legislation, such as the Synthetic Fuels Act of not too long ago, you might find it appropriate to consider the possibility of having a National Minerals Technology Act which would focus the needs of the country for a new technology, and might associate with it some upper limits of funding.

And it is for this reason that I am here today, to try to point this out.

Senator ALLOTT. I understand that, Doctor. And I am going to read every word of your statement—

Dr. HIBBARD. What I have just said is not in my statement. This is my personal opinion.

Senator ALLOTT (continuing). Even if I have to leave before you finish it.

Were you ever asked, for example, to comment on S. 522?

Dr. HIBBARD. Yes, sir.

Senator ALLOTT. And did you comment on it?

Dr. HIBBARD. Yes, sir.