

Mr. SMITH. It is very likely that it could be done in combination. What we are trying to do at this moment is to see whether or not water recovery is possible from our geothermal resources in addition to the use of steam for the generation of electric power. I have the personal feeling that as we have gone along here thinking of geothermal resources, we have been too concerned with its potential as a power source, perhaps to the degree of neglecting its real potential in terms of a water source to augment that water deficient lower southwestern United States area. We are now in a position of trying to find out, working with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Geological Survey, to determine whether or not that is an efficient use of geothermal resources. Hopefully, we can come back to the Congress in a year or so and explain the results of the studies. We are planning to budget in fiscal year 1973 an extensive program for geothermal investigations. After we have dug some exploratory holes to measure the temperatures, and after we complete some analyses of the subsurface structure we hope to verify the feasibility of withdrawing anywhere from 4 to 5 million acre-feet per year of the potential geothermal resource from that area. We do not now know that this is possible. We are trying now to determine whether that is a feasible proposition and if so, we hope then in the year or two hence to drill a deep pilot to actually extract some of that geothermal brine, with the cooperation of OSW, on a pilot or an experimental basis, to see what happens when we desalt it, answering questions on what kind of water we get, what kind of brine disposal problems we have, and whether if, in fact, there is a usable geothermal water resource.

Senator ALLOTT. Would you say at this time, then, that there has been no hard definition of an actual geothermal resource at that point?

Mr. SMITH. I would have to answer that question yes. I might get an argument from some of the scientific community, but we do not know enough yet.

Senator ALLOTT. And this is one of the things you expect to do in the next year or two?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, sir.

Senator ALLOTT. I hope it is not over 2.

One other question. We have been prone to think in big terms, particularly after the Bolsa Island project I notice that you have closed down the South Dakota installation. There are many, many communities in this country who have brackish water and have no apparent access to any other water for community use. One such is the city that you mentioned in your statement, Mr. O'Meara, the city of Las Animas in southeastern Colorado on the Arkansas River. From your testing there, what can you say that you have found out as far as moving toward a situation where you could advise them with respect to a program for the provision of municipal water? I believe that that water is just about as bad as the water we turn over to Mexico, and people drink it. At least I have been so informed. Now, where are we on this?

Mr. O'MEARA. Senator, we have only recently completed our experimental work in Colorado. We are continuing to evaluate the situation there not only in Las Animas but in several other water quality