

Senator JORDAN. Mr. Lazare, have you discussed your patent with anybody in the Office of Saline Water?

Mr. LAZARE. I have been in correspondence with the Office of Saline Water for 5 years before the company was even started. We have reviewed this, the technology is very novel. It does not involve—its novelty is attested to by the fact that there are no references in our basic patents—there is only one reference in our basic patent. Our patents have been accepted all over the world. This is a true novel technology.

Now, the questions come up—really, it is not whether the Office of Saline Water would fund us but the question of whether it would fund us under the conditions that would be acceptable to a commercial organization. The fact is that there is a patent clause which in essence deprives us of the—legally—of the title to our patents. We have nothing. We are not a company that has plants, competence as marketers or anything like that. We simply must rely on the integrity of our patents in order to have any assets at all that are worth carrying forward and developing. The patent clause as administered by the executive department really is inconsistent with the wording in the act itself. The act itself, if you read it carefully and you read the legal terminology, it provides, in effect, regardless of what anybody says, it in effect deprives us of the title, of a clear title to our patents.

Now, then, we emphasize, of course, the novelty of our process. We are mavericks in this field. We claim that this will work. We claim that—not only do we claim that this will work, but we will allow complete discussions of this; we will allow this to be refuted by others, using a panel of experts where these questions can be openly discussed, rather than just dismissed in camera without our being there.

Senator JORDAN. Do you think you were not given a fair hearing or a fair audience by the Office of Saline Water?

Mr. LAZARE. I could not even make any statement to that effect one way or the other, because the first thing that was presented to us was the patent clause and we could not even have accepted any funding from the Office of Saline Water unless we would include the patent clause in our agreement. And we had discussions with Mr. Doan, who is Assistant Solicitor to the Interior Department, and this is the case.

Now, then, the question is broader than whether the Office of Saline Water is to support us or not. The Office of Saline Water is to bring out new processes regardless of where they exist, regardless of whether they are Government-funded or whether they are in the private sector. It does not matter where the technology evolves from, it depends on whether it is more equal. And that is really the question. To have a pet project that somebody likes in the Office of Saline Water being given all this money, without any due consideration as to where other technology might also find either support or encouragement, rather than be considered as a rival, is a very important consideration in this type of act.

Now, this is why I have emphasized, I have suggested that you have a panel of experts on this.

Senator JORDAN. We think we have a panel of experts. If we arranged a meeting for you with our panel of experts, would you be willing to testify and give them your information?

Mr. LAZARE. I certainly will.