Mr. BLATNIK. That $2.5 million would be the savings on your harbor dredging if you had your program?

Colonel SEIDEL. Yes, sir. And we estimate that this is the average savings that we will have and the report sets up the average savings as a limit on the funds.

Mr. BLATNIK. I am a little bit twisted up on this. Right now it is costing the Corps of Engineers about $3.7 million a year for maintenance of the Charleston Harbor; is that not right?

Colonel SEIDEL. At the present moment, that is not correct, sir; at the present moment the Corps is spending about $2.5 million. It is estimated that between the period of 1975 and 2024, which is the effective life of this project, that our annual cost would be $3.7 million for dredging.

Mr. BLATNIK. For the interim plan to reimburse the power company until 1976—how much do you anticipate the reimbursement would amount to each year?

Colonel SEIDEL. On the average of $2.5 million, sir. As the channel stabilized, we would accumulate a reduction in our dredging cost that would ultimately reach the $2.5 million.

Mr. DORN. Would the gentleman yield?

Colonel, the truth is, you are just faced with a realistic or, rather, a given situation, which is that it is increasing every year, increasing cost to the taxpayers to dredge Charleston Harbor?

Colonel SEIDEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. DORN. And there is nothing you can do about this, regardless of how it happened, there is nothing we can do about the fact that this silt is being deposited in Charleston Harbor at an increased rate. And your responsibility, our responsibility, is to keep the harbor dredged. And the fact that it is costing $2.7 million now and will cost over $3 million in a few years, is given situation that warrants our consideration to do something about it at this time. I, too, have a little bit of doubt about how all this happened, why it happened, and how it started, but, nevertheless, we are faced with a given fact, a given situation, and the harbor is filling up.

Mr. BLATNIK. Congressman, if we follow the Bureau of the Budget's program for this interim period, although you shift, you might save on your dredging and maintenance costs, you have to refund or reimburse the power company—the total cost would be around $2.5 million a year, over an 8-year period it is $20 million; $20 million. You are right where we are today. I do not see how we save time or money.

Mr. DORN. Mr. Chairman, that is exactly the way I look at it.

Colonel, you might very briefly, for about 30 seconds, explain this silt deposit. It is not the kind of silt that most of the members of the committee are thinking about. It is this fresh water. Would you explain that? I have had it explained to me by the colonel at Charleston.

Colonel SEIDEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. DORN. It is not really silt. It is a chemical formation that takes place there.

Colonel SEIDEL. It is a flocculation, really. The material is carried down in the fresh water.

Mr. BLATNIK. What is the chemical name of the material? Is it a clay?