

Legislators Hear Report on A&M 'Nuplex' Studies

A briefing Saturday on Texas A&M's "Nuplex" study opened hearings for the state legislative committee studying possible widespread use of nuclear desalination processes in meeting Texas' future water needs.

"The idea of using nuclear energy for desalination and power generation holds definite promise for the future," noted Rep. Dave Finney of Fort Worth following the meeting.

Rep. Finney heads the five-man interim committee formed by the Texas House of Representatives last year. Other members are Reps. W. R. Archer Jr. of Houston, Hudson Moyer of Amarillo, Tom Niland of El Paso and John Wright of Grand Prairie.

"The decline in the supply of fossil fuels forces us to search for other sources of energy," Finney observed. "We need to

start planning now — and we must not think small."

"Nuplex," Texas A&M officials explained, is a coined word describing a large complex consisting of a nuclear power reactor, electric production, water desalination, chemical processing and production, agriculture and associated activities.

The "Nuplex" concept, they said, represents a new and much larger dimension in totally inter-

related enterprises based on low-cost abundant electricity and water.

Technical briefings were presented by Dr. A. D. Suttle Jr., A&M's vice president for research and director of its Cyclotron Institute; Gen. A. R. Luedicke, associate engineering dean and former general manager of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, and Dr. R. E. Wainerdi, also an associate engineering

dean and head of the Activation Analysis Research Laboratory.

"Assuming the research basic to the building of such a complex were successful," Dr. Suttle remarked, "the unprecedented size of such energy centers, together with a vastly upgraded technology in desalting and in nuclear energy generation, allows one to project lower costs and unusual methods for using the plant output."

Gen. Luedicke reviewed present research efforts throughout the country.

"The purpose of our efforts to date," the general said, "has been to study the current state of technology against the backdrop of the total problem of a nuclear-agro-industrial complex."

Throughout the study, he added, notations have been made of particular areas of research and technology and economics and

management in which the university's talents and capabilities could be applied.

Following the briefing, the legislators toured Texas A&M's nuclear facilities — cyclotron, nuclear reactor and activation analysis laboratory — and data processing center and environmental engineering laboratory, all of which might be used in long-range studies.

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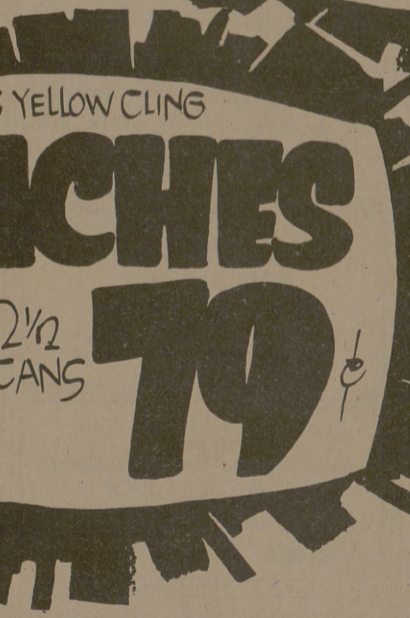
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