

Last year Congress enacted the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, to finance pilot projects in the most modern police techniques. Today, I am signing into law a substantial—and well deserved—pay increase for District policemen.

Better police organization is part of the answer. Last year I appointed a District of Columbia Crime Commission and asked its members to recommend better ways of reducing crime in Washington. Many of the Commission's recommendations are designed to make the organization of the District Police Department a model for the Nation. Most are already being carried out. And the District of Columbia Commissioners have informed me that they have signed and are putting into effect the reorganization plan for the Police Department recommended by the District of Columbia Crime Commission.

Better staffed courts are part of the answer. This year, five new judgeships were added to the court of general sessions. They will help eliminate the delays which have impeded swift and effective Justice.

Each of these steps has the same goal: more effective prevention, detection, and punishment of crime in the District of Columbia.

The problem of crime outside of the District of Columbia must primarily be dealt with by local officials. I have promised them the complete cooperation of the Federal Government within its proper sphere. We have already begun that cooperation with the Law Enforcement Assistance Act. We are prepared to expand our cooperative efforts. I will act promptly on the recommendations of the National Crime Commission, which I appointed in July of 1965, when they are received.

We know that criminal behavior, and the conditions out of which it springs, will not yield easily to our efforts. But we have given the highest priority to an intelligent, relentless fight to make the streets of the District of Columbia safe for law-abiding people—and we shall make them so.

I renew my pledge to pursue every avenue, use every tool, support any law that holds promise of advancing us in our drive against crime. In doing so I will need the cooperation of every man and woman whose commitment—as is mine—is to a capital where civic order and social justice prevail.

GEOTHERMAL STEAM ACT OF 1966

I am withholding my approval from the Geothermal Steam Act of 1966.

I am taking this action because many of the principles embodied in the bill violate the public interest.

Geothermal steam is produced by the internal heat of the earth. It is well known to every schoolchild in America under other names. Old Faithful at Yellowstone is one example of a geothermal steam spring.

We know very little about how extensive or valuable our geothermal resources are. They may be an inexhaustible supply of energy. Today, for example, the steam from a single geothermal spring is generating enough electricity to serve a community of 50,000 people. Geo-

thermal springs may also hold untapped mineral wealth—such as gold, lithium, and silver.

These circumstances dictate a policy of prudence and reason in the leasing of Federal lands to develop this resource.

S. 1674 does just the opposite.

It ignores the basic lessons we have learned much to our sorrow—that our natural resources are priceless treasures which must be developed with wisdom and foresight.

The bill is flawed by six major provisions which run counter to sound public policy:

First. It provides for unfair and unlimited "grandfather" rights. The holders of mineral or mining leases on Federal lands as of September 7, 1965, would be automatically entitled to convert them into geothermal leases. This amounts to a free gift of valuable public property rights to these developers, and gives them an undue advantage over other prospective developers.

Second. It provides for maximum leases of 51,200 acres—an area four times greater than our experts say is needed for economical development. This could result in a single developer monopolizing the geothermal resources of entire States.

Third. It provides that royalties are payable only on steam "sold or utilized." This could encourage the wanton waste of a precious natural asset.

Fourth. It fails to provide specific and clear authority for the Government to readjust the lease terms and conditions at suitable intervals. The public deserves this protection because we still know so little about our geothermal resources.

Fifth. It provides for perpetual leases to the developer if steam is produced in commercial quantities. As a result, future generations of Americans will have lost their stake in the formulation of policies for a natural resource which may be inexhaustible, and whose potential we are only beginning to appreciate.

Sixth. It gives the developer 20 years in which to begin production. Our scientists and engineers say that this is too long a period and will encourage speculation.

In short, I have withheld my approval because this bill does not sufficiently protect the interests of the American people.

If these were only technical flaws in a measure providing for the necessary development of geothermal energy, I would gladly sign the bill. For I believe we must move vigorously to make use of this promising national asset.

But they are more than technical flaws. They represent a serious failure to protect the people's interest.

When we consider landmark legislation of this sort, dealing with a vast and little-known natural resource, we must remember that we are acting—not just for today or 5 years from today—but for decades to come. Once we have given away the people's interest in the wealth of their land, we cannot easily retrieve what has been lost. We must understand that we are trustees for 200 million Americans. All that we do must protect their interest—and the interest of their children and grandchildren—in the rich

legacy with which nature has endowed us.

This bill does not do that. And because it does not, I will not give it my approval.

This does not mean we should delay the development and use of these resources. Wise and prudent trustees do not lose opportunities to increase the value of the estate they manage. But we must assure ourselves that we have first protected the people's interest before we make our geothermal springs available for productive development.

I have directed the Secretary of the Interior and the Acting Attorney General to prepare a new proposal to accomplish our objectives—one that eliminates the pitfalls of the present bill.

Next year we will ask Congress for legislation to transform the potential of this national treasure into a reality. We will ask for legislation that will protect the public interest, encourage economic and efficient development with a fair and just return to the developer, and conserve the benefits of that development in coming generations. When that legislation comes before me, I shall sign it enthusiastically.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 14, 1966.

ESTABLISHING THE PAST AND PRESENT LOCATION OF A CERTAIN PORTION OF THE COLORADO RIVER

I have withheld my approval from H.R. 13955, "Establishing the past and present location of a certain portion of the Colorado River for certain purposes."

This bill would have the effect of conveying 2,100 acres of public lands to a group of 19 individuals and corporations without payment of compensation. This bill comes at a time when the U.S. District Court in Arizona has, under active consideration, the complex and legal factual issues involving the ownership of these very lands. The bill comes after the Government's ownership has been established with respect to almost 1,000 other occupants of land in this area.

In the late 1950's investigation by the Department of the Interior disclosed that more than 1,000 persons were illegally occupying public lands along the lower Colorado River. Subsequently, the Department initiated actions under which most of these occupants either vacated the land or explicitly recognized Federal ownership. Other occupants were removed following successful legal action by the Government. Litigation in regard to others is still pending.

The courts are the traditional forum for determining legal questions relating to landownership and I see no reason for making a special exception here and interfering with the orderly judicial process. If the case is resolved in favor of the claimants, they will receive title to the land without the present bill. If the case is resolved against the claimants and the Congress believes that the equities were so compelling that relief should have been granted, the Congress can act after the factual issues have been fully litigated and a complete record has been assembled.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 14, 1966.