



Adjoining Mexico City, the usually dry Lake Texcoco is to be filled with water to supply the city.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Reviving Lake Texcoco

Mexico City: Engineers will refill dust bowl with pumped ground water. The scheme should both end dust storms and attract tourists

by Emil Zubryn

Mexico City may soon have a new and giant lake—Lake Texcoco—on the city's eastern perimeter.

A joint commission involving the Nuclear Energy Commission, the Ministry of Hydraulic Resources and the Federal Electrical Commission is working in the now usually dry Texcoco lakebed. A total of 90 wells, each 90 meters or more deep, have already been drilled as the first step in an ambitious project.

Hydraulics engineer Roberto Graue will not make any estimate of actual costs, but says preliminary geological and other studies and drilling have already cost \$800,000.

Lake Texcoco is rumored to have been dried up in a search for the fabulous treasure of Moctezuma, last Emperor of the Aztecs. No official admission was ever made that the lake was drained to find a hoard of gold and jewels, however, nor is there any knowledge as to whether the treasure hunters, allegedly high officials, found anything.

But whether the lake was drained by man or destroyed by nature, for more than a decade and a half the Mexican capital has been punished by dust

storms swirling out of the dry lakebed.

Officials feel that a renovated lake will not only turn the vast area into a tourist attraction, but will also supply water for Mexico City.

The system to be used to form the lake will simultaneously pump water from the subsoil and cause the lakebed to settle. This principle has been inadvertently proven by the sinking of a statue at the intersection of Reforma-Juárez and Bucareli-Rosales in Mexico City. The monument has sunk 9 meters as a result of extraction of subsoil water for the city's needs. A good deal of the sinking-city phenomenon has been attributed to the extraction of subsoil water, now strictly controlled.

"The Texcoco project would be more or less the same thing, only on an accelerated rate," says Graue, who is head of the operation.

In addition to water pumped from the subsoil, the lake would be filled from rivers in the eastern part of the Valley of Mexico. The lake may cover up to 500 hectares (1,250 acres).

The project may also be instrumental in finding a remedy for the steadily



Mexican Tourist Bureau
Statue already has sunk 9 meters.
sinking subsoil of the city. "The sinking of city subsoil," says Graue, "is a fundamental part of our studies."

5 october 1968/vol. 94/science news/349