

Coal

Curious. The three leading sources of energy in this country are domestically produced oil and natural gas, and foreign oil. But supplies of these fuels are dwindling, and most foreign oil sources have been unreliable.

Curious. The most abundant fossil fuel in this country is coal. But coal is also the least used of our fossil fuels.

Curious. This country's consumption of energy continues to grow. Yet, most of our coal resources remain underdeveloped.

Curious, indeed.

Coal: Energy in Reserve

Some estimates of total domestic coal resources go as high as three *trillion* tons. At present production rates, such amounts could last nearly 5,000 years. Not all of this supply is recoverable, however. The more meaningful estimates deal with recoverable reserves.

Given today's prices, current technology and existing environmental constraints, the amount of economically recoverable reserves is estimated to be in the 250-300 billion ton range. Such reserves could last at least 300 years. This compares with the present proved reserves of domestic oil and gas which are estimated at only about 11 times current annual production.

Put another way, coal reserves account for 90 percent of this country's total fossil energy reserves. Gas accounts for four percent and oil accounts for about three percent.

So, this country has enough coal to help meet its energy needs for centuries to come. Enough coal to be able to tell foreign countries that we don't need their oil. Enough coal to sustain economic growth, develop jobs and raise our already high standard of living. Finally, enough coal to provide us with the time to develop other more attractive nonfossil energy sources.

There is a hitch, however, and the hitch is not simple. Domestic production of coal will have to increase substantially over the next decade while new energy sources are made commercially feasible.

Some forecasters say this country must double its production of coal by 1985, while at the same time continuing to work to develop all our other energy