

is limited by the fact that it is necessary to produce all raw materials from their natural deposits. If we are to maintain and increase the supply of minerals required by our national economy, these minerals must be found and developed.

In an appearance before this committee on March 21, Dr. Walter Hibbard, then Director of the Bureau of Mines, stated:

Today the United States is the largest consumer of metals and fuels in the free world. It maintains this position by being the largest producer of minerals and fuels in the free world. Over the years it has maintained this production leadership, even in the face of the necessity for using lower and lower grade resources and rising labor costs, by an aggressive program of exploration and new discoveries and in advancing technology which has reduced the overall costs of extracting and processing these lower-grade ores.

Dr. Hibbard also drew attention to a situation that is emerging which appears to threaten both the adequacy and dependability of our supply of minerals and mineral fuels. He pointed out that if the present trends continue "our capability to produce minerals from domestic sources may not only remain static, but in some cases disappear because they cannot be maintained in competition costwise with foreign production." He went on to emphasize that technology has the inherent power to improve the competitive position of domestic mineral resources.

What has this to do with mined land reclamation? Certainly such reclamation is a cost factor and, if reasonable, a legitimate and fully accepted one by the mining industry. The mining industry should not, nor should any other segment of our society ruthlessly destroy beneficial environmental conditions. But the economic impact of the legislation before you must be recognized. The problems of maintaining appropriate environmental quality are such as to require the most delicate balancing of interests—interests that include the public's vital need for mineral resources.

One of the major objections to the legislation is that, in its approach, it does not make clear the necessity for reasonableness. It fails to reflect a proper regard for practicability and economic feasibility. It exposes mining operations to the imposition of arbitrary requirements by Government officials responsible for issuing permits under the law. In our judgment, the placing of Federal controls over surface mining will not only prove to be a large and unnecessary drain on the Federal Treasury, but could easily become such an economic burden to the domestic mining industry as to seriously weaken it as it faces a dangerous competitive situation in relation to foreign mineral resources.

As I stated earlier, the American Mining Congress has analyzed the problem on a national basis. At least one of the bills before you, S. 3132, was inspired by the Department of Interior's special report on "Surface Mining and Our Environment."

Having worked on the problem of mined land reclamation for years and having examined this publication, we are convinced that the information and the various data presented in the report do not lead to the conclusions drawn either as to the scope of the problem or the remedial actions recommended. There are serious problems referred to in the report. But these problems have been recognized and are being dealt with by the States in which they exist. There is no indication that additional controls are needed. The most serious problems are old ones. Such problems are not being caused by presently