

The overburden overlying the coal varies from 40 feet to 140 feet, so you can see that although various combinations of these forms a strip coal mine almost every mine has different conditions and different requirements for mining equipment, mining procedures, and of course for reclamation procedures. This is just in the areas we operate in.

To further explain, the variances in not only the operating but also the economics, let's compare the difference between 15 inches of coal and 12 feet of coal. If we uncover an acre of coal in the first instance we would have available to us 1,870 tons of coal, whereas in the second instance we would have 18,000 tons of coal. In other words, if the coal were of the same value we would have 10 times as much value in the second instance as in the first, and this amount of difference, as you can readily understand, greatly affects the overall economics.

I explained to you before how the opencut mining operation proceeded and since the spoil areas I referred to will also vary in composition according to the formations of which they are composed, and will vary in size and shape according to the size and type of equipment that has mined them, it is easy to see that the type of reclamation work that is required will also vary.

You remember I stated we operated in eight States and six of these States already have State strip mining reclamation laws which we are operating under and the remaining two have proposed laws under study at the present time by their respective legislative bodies. Both the mining companies and the State officials feel the present laws are accomplishing the reclamation results required for the conditions in that State. These requirements are not all uniform, and they must be different, due to the extreme variation in the condition of the areas to be reclaimed and the results expected as explained above.

There is an extreme difference in this. As you have heard, some States have changed their conditions as they go along, trying under actual conditions to determine what is the best results that we can obtain.

As you know, even the yard in an expensive new house is unsightly and unacceptable to the public until the shrubbery and grasses that are planted have a chance to grow, and we feel that this makes a good comparison to the conditions in many of our mining areas at the present time.

As proof of this statement I could take you to areas that were mined 30 years ago on which no reclamation work whatsoever was performed and I would challenge you to distinguish these areas from adjacent nondisturbed areas. We don't propose letting nature do it alone, but even man also might be given time.

One of the early original factors that made this country the most outstanding in the world was our abundance of all types of minerals and our technical ingenuity and ability to mine these at a cost which permitted us to be independent of all other countries. I feel that a Federal law such as the proposed S. 3132 will result in increasing the cost of which will lower our competitive position in the world market. In addition, due to the law's necessary broadness to permit it to apply to all types of surface mining throughout the varying mining conditions across the entire Nation, it will result in the mining limitation