The communities of the range have shown a keen interest in encouraging tourists to visit the area by establishing such facilities as the Museum of Mining at Chisholm, the Two Harbors Park, featuring objects relating to transportation in the mining industry, mine viewpoints, and many others.

Minnesota's oldest underground mine at Soudan has now been converted into a State park. Tours, both on the surface and 2,400 feet underground, provide visitors at the park with an accurate interpretation of underground mine operations. The State is presently investigating the feasibility of establishing an open pit State park.

The mining companies have served the tourist by establishing mine viewpoints, conducting plant tours and establishing recreation areas on water impoundments created to supply water for the taconite plants.

Minnesota is aware of the many aspects of mining effects upon our environment and we have already instituted action.

Water pollution due to mining, a major problem to much of the mining industry and the country, is practically nonexistent in Minnesota. Through the cooperative efforts of State agencies and the mining industry, plant waters are recirculated through closed-circuit systems, and large settling basins have been established to handle any discolored mine waters. The Strip and Surface Mine Study Policy Committee of the Department of the Interior recognized this fact in their report "Surface Mining and Our Environment" by stating, "The minerals in the formations are chemically inert and the terrain is flat; thus the mining operations cause little or no water pollution."

The Department of Conservation is presently conducting research directed toward improving the quality of taconite plant water. If successful, this will further reduce the water pollution potential and will also decrease the amount of fresh makeup water required for taconite processing.

The mining industry has shown an awareness of the problem by conducting experimental planting on surface dumps, tailings basins, and stockpiles. Tailings basins have generally been placed in areas which would be least detrimental to our natural resources and screened from public view except by air. Research is presently being conducted to rejuvenate tailings basins to allow vegetation growth by fertilization and soil conditioning.

There is a vast difference between iron mining in Minnesota and coal mining in other areas of the country. In most coal operations, mining in a particular area is completed in a relatively short period of time with the operator moving on to other areas with no reason to return.

Due to the immense reserve and the structure of the formation, iron ore mining in Minnesota is a very stable industry, and the mining area will not be exhausted in the foreseeable future.

Only in the southeastern part of the State, in the Fillmore County area, where small, shallow iron ore deposits occur, does a situation similar to coal mining exist. In this area it has long been the practice to return the area to its natural condition upon completion of mining.

By contouring and replacement of the topsoil, farm crops are being raised on the mined-out areas shortly after mining operations are concluded.