

plywood was achieved by means of modern plywood and veneer plants, based primarily on imported logs.

South Korea has about 50 different kinds of mineral resources but still needs to import iron ore, coal, copper and lead in substantial quantities. Conspicuous by its absence is petroleum. South Korea has ambitious plans for petroleum exploration in its offshore areas, and Gulf, Caltex and Shell have each contracted to explore and develop areas off the west or south coasts. Offshore boundary disputes with Japan and China prevent further leasing, however, but an agreement with Japan awaits ratification. A national oil company was set up in 1974 to oversee exploration activities.

Coal, mostly in the form of anthracite, is one of the leading mineral resources in South Korea. Geological surveys show that there are about 1.3 million tonnes of coal deposits, of which about one-quarter is exploitable. In 1982, however, it was reported that a new coalfield with reserves of 56.2 million tonnes had been discovered in Kangura province. In an effort to increase domestic output, under-sea deposits may be mined. At present, supplies are drawn from a variety of state and privately owned mines, mostly small in size.

Domestic consumption is currently rising by some 900,000 tonnes per year. As a result, domestic output has to be augmented by imports. Coking coal has been imported in substantial quantities since 1978 for the iron and steel industry.

Iron ore reserves are estimated to be about 108.8 million tonnes, mostly of magnetite. Copper ore reserves are put at 90,700 tonnes (copper content) and a similar amount of tungsten exists. The metal content of the lead-zinc deposit at Yeonwha approaches 113,375 tonnes. The tungsten mine at Sangdong is the second largest in the world; more tungsten and molybdenum ore bodies are known to exist nearby. Other mines work gold-silver ore deposits.

South Korea is one of the principal world sources of natural graphite, with estimated reserves of amorphous graphite of 27.2 million tonnes and reserves of crystalline graphite of 2.4 million tonnes. There are about 40 operating fluorite mines and it is estimated that there are 1.8 tonnes of fluorite deposits in 70 per cent concentrate. Limestone is abundant and cement is produced in large quantities; by 1984, the capacity of the cement industry had exceeded 18.1 million tonnes. Kaolin production is substantial. Several uranium ore bodies have been discovered.

Lacking hydroelectric potential, South Korea relies predominantly on oil and coal for electric power generation, supplying about six-tenths and one-third, respectively, of total energy needs in the early 1980's. Other energy sources are hydro power, firewood and, increasingly, atomic power.