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Coal — a possible energy option for Canada

Canada has the energy resource base to support a relatively quick and clean shift away from world oil. Natural gas and electricity will provide Canada with an extra margin of capacity that will give it time to analyze and develop alternative sources of energy, said Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Mark Lalonde in a speech to the Canadian Conference on Coal in Vancouver, September 15. Excerpts from the speech, which discusses the role of coal in Canada's future energy situation, follow:

...In many respects, coal provides Canada with a further measure of energy security. Canada has more coal than its own future needs will likely require. High transportation costs may dictate a continuation of the current pattern of simultaneously importing and exporting coal. Nevertheless, coal represents a major opportunity for development in Canada, and choices will have to be made as to how to best exploit this resource base.

The government is anxious to encourage public discussion of the development alternatives for this important resource. While encouraging such discussion, I remain very much aware of the urgency with which coal development is being pursued internationally....

The members of the International Energy Agency have set out a set of principles designed to enlarge coal use. Can-

ada subscribes to the IEA statement of principles, to the extent our complex constitutional situation allows....

As you know, Canada participated in the recent Venice Summit meeting. The participants agreed on a target of doubling coal production and use by 1990 — a formidable challenge. This requires long-term commitments by coal producers and consumers. Canada, with its large coal potential, can hardly stand aloof.

Environmental risks

Two other points made by the Venice group are of particular interest to the federal government. One was the emphasis on improving national infrastructure to ensure the supply and use of coal. The other was the concern expressed about the environmental risks associated with increased coal production and combustion....

Perhaps the greatest concern associated with the increased use of coal is the effects of emissions from its uncontrolled combustion, especially in thermal power plants. This is particularly the case in eastern North America. The government of Canada is deeply concerned about the effects of acid rain and is committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure that Canada's contribution is minimized.

Acid rain is an international problem. As you know, Canada has recently signed a memorandum of intent with the United States to jointly lay the groundwork for negotiation of a bilateral agreement to combat the problem of near and long-range transboundary air pollution. In the interim there is the commitment to take every opportunity to reduce emissions.

I want to make it absolutely clear that



George Hunter

An open-pit coal mine.

Fourteen years ago today...

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation began television broadcasting in colour; initially 30 hours a week on the English network and 15 hours a week on the French network were broadcast in colour.