High Country News

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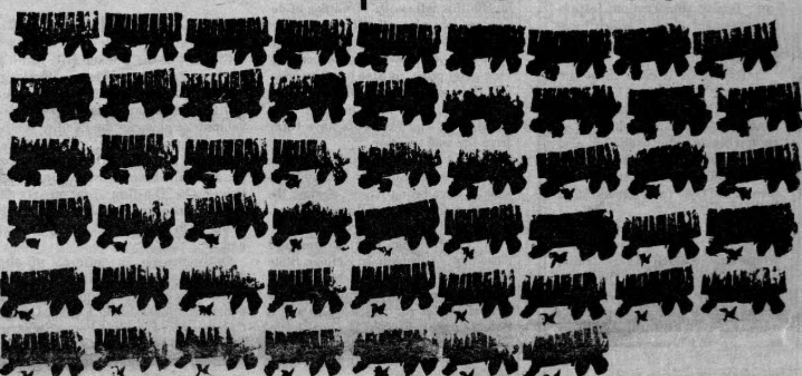
In the News

Super-trains breed super-terminals



by Terry L. Shorb

RAPELJE, Mont. — Rapelje reminds one of a seaside town. In all directions, one gazes out over crests and troughs of gold and brown — strip farming that rolls and heaves itself right up to the back doors of the few houses in the tiny community.

Downtown is dead from the main road east. But there is stubborn, vestigial life to the west. A post office hunkers at the corner with a single gas pump and a tiny store where one can find the basic necessities. Down the dusty road a bit looms a solemn two-story brick schoolhouse. A fat old dog lounges on its earthen front yard.

To the north, huddled against a backdrop of corrugated granaries that shimmer like mercury under the glaring sun, there is a small, high-steepled church. During this harvest season, attendance is light. There will be time to give thanks for the bounty later on when the grain is safely on its way to market; if the farmers and ranchers can get it to market.

The Rapelje Grain Co. is a madhouse. Already the 100,000 bushel capacity storage facility is clogged with the first three days' harvest. Big tandem trucks roll up to haul it away. But it seems like a losing battle. The elevator owner worries that farmers will grow impatient and find another way to get their yield on its way to West Coast outlets.

Once, the empty rails stretching out across the plains from his elevator functioned as that vital transportation link to the outside world. But no more. The last hopper car to be shipped out was in March. Burlington Northern, which owns the cars, the trackage and the ground the elevator stands on has announced its intention to abandon the solitary spur line that connects them to the rest of the rail network that moves the bounty of the great, extinct inland sea to the sea itself.

The people do not want to lose their line. But there is little chance of saving it. Besides Rapelje, lines serving the towns of Pendroy, Ft. Benton, Big Sandy, Hogeland, Brockway, Wilsall, Bridger and others are to be abandoned by BN sometime in the next three years.

In all, BN intends to abandon more than 600 miles of track in north central Montana. Neighboring North Dakota expects to lose a third of its trackage in the next three years. The consolidation scheme will affect most of the other 23 states through which BN runs more than 30,000 miles of tracks.

"It's hard to rest easy" these days, said one Montana grain grower.

THE MONEY LOSERS

There are currently approximately 240 country elevators in the state of Montana to move the 126 million bushels of grain that the state produces each year. Most of that which is exported — some 90 percent — goes to the West Coast for shipment to other countries. Of that, between 65 and 75 percent is moved by rail – the remainder by truck.

When BN announced to the agricultural world last year that unit trains were the wave of the future and that eventually there would only be two rates — for single cars and the 52-unit trains and nothing in between — many shippers, elevator operators and small town businessmen saw their economic lives flash suddenly before their eyes.

BN says it does not want to get out of the grain hauling business, only back away from low-traffic, inefficient, backwoods lines that are money losers.

"Farmers, shippers and the railroad will all benefit from the (abandonment) program," says a BN fact sheet on the subject. "It will be a change for the better."

But opponents argue that the massive consolidation effort will cause irreparable economic harm to small communities which rely on local elevators as tin-sided trading magnets. Others fear increased truck traffic caused by growers struggling to get their grain from farm to super-terminal will result in burgeoning maintenance costs for the highways they travel over.

This will not happen, says BN Public Relations officer Bill Joplin: "As more and more growers take advantage of the lower rates and ship on the unit trains, less grain will move by truck than before and there will be less traffic on some of those highways." He dismisses the charge of harm to small towns because of the collectivized loading terminals as "rampant emotionalism." The people who have traded there will continue to trade there, Joplin predicts, adding that "the growers don't buy their bigger implements there anyway, so the impact would be minimal."

SUPER SYSTEMS

The jury is still not in on just what effect unit trains and super-terminals will have on smaller towns in grain-growing areas. Much depends on the number and ownership of a new system destined to one day sprout from the fruited plains: the "super-terminals."

Since the price differential between shipping by a single car or 52-unit rate was significant, and since BN left no

(continued on page 10)

Dear Friends,

It may have been the cool, spring-like weather of late. Or maybe we got too much rest on our just-concluded vacation. Whatever the cause, the entire staff has been hit by a most unusual bout of spring cleaning fever.

Aging garbage is finally getting hauled. Bookcases are sighing as they are relieved of useless burdens. Files are being purged of ancient content.

Besides room to move, the flourish is turning up some gems that rival the dustiest attic treasure: feasibility studies on the Teton Dam in Idaho, long since collapsed from faulty construction; letters from readers, some of which have long since collapsed from age; and a favorite, Bulletin 320.

Dated 1952, it came from the Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station, and discusses the possible applications of shale oil as an herbicide. The pamphlet also cites the first reference to oil shale as a 1694 British patent, which speaks of "Oyle from some kind of stone."

Another kind of continuing search has turned up Terry Shorb, whose fine research on grain trains appears in this issue. Terry is editor of the **MontWyo. Agricultural News** — a Billings-based weekly covering farm issues in Montana and Wyoming.

Terry took his current job four years ago, after a stint editing the **Powell Tribune**. When prodded, he admits the assignment brings him cartloads of complaints from farmers on all matters, especially federal regulations. But he's keeping his finger on the pulse of agriculture, and promises more articles for us.

While Terry worked, we played. It was a scattering in the winds, too, as we all took our separate relief. In short, only Kathy and Betsy went fishing (and only Kathy successfully), while on the other end of the scale, workaholic Geoff was seen one week catching up on his files, not flies.

We're all back in rested radiance, however, and looking forward to a fall of news.

BULLETIN: For those of you who noticed a certain sameness to last year's baby bulletins — i.e. we seemed to be producing a tribe of females at HCN — we offer a glorious and welcome variation: Cyndy Simer gave birth on Wednesday to a baby boy, Kurt Matthew.

— the staff

Western Roundup

Silver slump closes Idaho mine

Workers claim poison

The Bunker Hill Co. has announced it is shutting down its mineral operations at Kellogg, Idaho, and while a new operator or employee ownership is being discussed, prospects for a takeover appear to be dim.

Bunker Hill's 2,400 employees mined and refined silver, zinc and lead in the northern Idaho mining district. Facing layoffs this fall, with hundreds of dependent jobs also affected, unemployment is the main concern in Kellogg.

But the shutdown, blamed on sagging silver prices, is also leaving unsettled the issue of lead poisoning and the determination of how much, if any, damage Kellogg residents have borne from the lead smelter.

A continuing health study is likely to be cancelled. Meanwhile, nearly 20 residents have brought suit against the firm, claiming their children have suffered from lead contamination.

Bunker Hill has denied that lead poisoning is a problem in Kellogg. State health officials have generally agreed with the firm. But researchers at the federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta have criticized the health surveys conducted in the community since the early 1970s to determine the extent of lead contamination.

The latest study was wholly funded by Bunker Hill, raising concern about its objectivity. "Since it's the company itself that is the source of most of the lead, you'd wonder," said CDC's Peter Drotman last year.

Results from a recent blood sampling from 260 residents were received this week by the Idaho State Department of Health and Welfare in Boise, said Charles Brokopp, an agency official directing the Kellogg study. The results will be available early this month after those tested have been notified.

The sampling could detect dangerous levels of lead. But public health nurse Annabelle Rose, who took the samples, said that is unlikely. "I'm not concerned about lead poisoning," she said. "This isn't like New York City, where children are having convulsions (from lead poisoning)."

Brokopp said he would like to see the health study continued for one or two more years. "It's a perfect chance to study blood levels after an operation ceases," he said.

Funding, however, remains an obstacle. There's "no chance" for state funds, predicted Brokopp. In addition, the firm's commitment to the health study expired last month. Brokopp said he would ask Bunker Hill officials to pay for new studies.

Meanwhile, Edna Grace Yost and other Kellogg residents have sued Bunker Hill. Details of the case are unavailable, with participants under a court gag order to prevent adverse publicity. But the case, to be heard Sept. 14 in U.S. District Court, Boise, involves claims of health damage from lead poisoning.

Power grid upset

Closure of the Bunker Hill mining and smeltering operation in Kellogg, Idaho, could raise power costs to other utility customers and disrupt power development plans for the Pacific Northwest region.

Bunker Hill is the largest customer of the Spokane-based Washington Water Power Co. The firm spent nearly $6 million on electricity alone last year, along with sizable purchases of natural gas.

Determining the effects of the operation's closure is difficult, complicated by a network of differing pricing schedules, said Idaho Public Utility Commission President Perry Swisher. But he predicted a 30 cents a month increase in gas prices for residential customers, and said electricity price jumps were "possible." The increases would replace lost revenues the utility would encounter without corresponding drops in operating expenses.

More critically, however, Bunker Hill's withdrawal from the region's power grid throws into doubt the utility's already controversial power plant construction schedule, said Swisher.

WWP is now two-thirds towards completing three new nuclear power plants. Marketing problems have forced the utility to consider scrapping two other plants just begun. With Bunker Hill a targeted consumer of the other new plants' power, their feasibility is also now debatable, said Swisher, who is a strong advocate of energy conservation as an alternative to new plant construction.

In a related matter, the prospects of another firm taking over the Bunker Hill operation could be dimmed by the higher rates — at least 50 percent higher, said Swisher — the utility would charge a new owner for electricity. They would be based on the PUC's newly-implemented reforms that charge industrial customers a flat rate schedule, rather than the traditional declining scale still used by most states.

Wildlife watched with oil dollars

To avert a threatened lawsuit, the Overthrust Industrial Association (OIA) has agreed to spend $1 million on efforts to prevent wildlife damages in a portion of the Overthrust Belt.

The Wyoming Wildlife Federation had threatened to sue energy developers in southwestern Wyoming over the potential effects on wildlife of intense drilling for oil and gas. After several months of negotiation, the OIA (representing 37 energy firms) and the wildlife group agreed that the association would give $800,000 for a wildlife study; $160,000 for the Wyoming, Idaho and Utah fish and game departments; and $40,000 for an environmental awareness program.

The wildlife group had originally sought less than one-third that total for a study covering only the Wyoming section of the Overthrust Belt. Now the study will also include parts of Utah and Idaho.

To avoid accusations of a biased effort, the project coordinating committee will include persons appointed by the National Wildlife Federation, OIA, the Bureau of Land Management, the three governors and fish and game departments of the states involved. The wildlife agencies will not be involved in the coordinating committee if they bid for the wildlife study contract.

The study will take three years, with interim results released periodically to the public and industry so mitigation efforts can begin. The money to state agencies will fund enforcement specialists to reduce poaching. The environmental awareness program will educate people new to Wyoming about the state's natural resources.

The Wyoming Wildlife Federation still believes a regional environmental impact statement should be prepared to predict the effects of energy development throughout the Overthrust Belt. But the OIA continues to balk at that proposal, fearing the statement could be used as a delaying tactic.

Similar wildlife studies are being considered elsewhere in the Overthrust region and the Rockies. D. Vandegraaff of the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association in Denver said his group was holding discussions this month to consider several studies in Montana. He called the OIA settlement "just fine," but said still to be resolved for his group is the issue of who should pay — the individual firms or the association.

— Marjane Ambler

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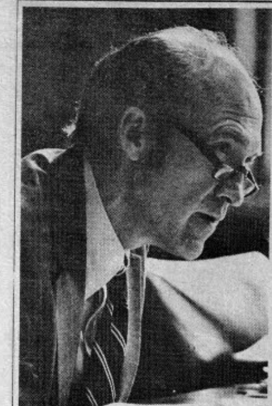


Simpson hears complaints

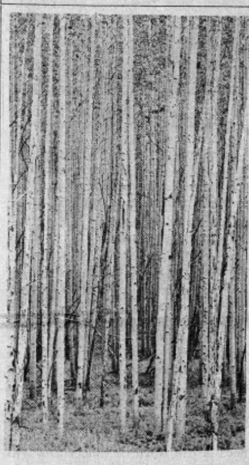
Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) met Aug. 20 with angry Pinedale residents, who complained that the Forest Service had failed to listen to their concerns. Their concerns include destruction of wildlife, reduced retention of snowpack in a semi-arid region, and roads into the forest that will increase four-wheel-drive vehicle impacts. "There's a trend in Washington among these big companies to strike while the iron is hot...They're starting out too one-sided, and (Interior Secretary) Jim Watt's a perfect example," said Floyd Bouseman, a county commissioner.

Locals also complained that with the cost of road-building the Forest Service was actually losing the taxpayers money on the sale.

Said Simpson, "This is the harshest correspondence (the Wyoming delegation) has had on anything in two-and-a-half years."

Forest Service officials say the roads will be obliterated after the harvest; critics point to the agency's poor record of destroying timber roads, which then become recreational routes. Bridger-Teton spokesman Fred Kingwill said no timbering was expected this fall, though the sale will proceed Sept. 24. Weather conditions should prevent any harvesting or road-building until next summer.

The Wyoming delegation, however, expects to decide on a course of action before the sale. Simpson aide Don Hardy said they would consider, among other options, setting up a blue ribbon commission of experts to review long-range planning in the Bridger-Teton National Forest before any development could take place.



David Sumner

Pinedale sale

A planned harvest of 7.3 million board feet of timber in the upper Green Valley near Pinedale, Wyo., has caused a flurry of protest and forced at least one Wyoming senator to rethink his commitment to "multiple use."

The timber sale, affecting about 400 acres in the Bridger-Teton National Forest, is scheduled to go on the auction block Sept. 24. Opposition by county commissioners, state legislators and local residents has blown the issue into a much larger debate over the U.S. Forest Service's alleged lack of response to local opinion.

Bridger-Teton officials, led by Forest Supervisor Reid Jackson, continue to defend the sale as "carefully designed to meet wildlife, visual, and forestry concerns."

But locals like John Borzea, co-chairman of the Bridger-Teton branch of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, and State Sen. John Turner, say that road-building and timber harvesting in the area could damage the elk herd of northwestern Wyoming, the largest in the lower 48 states, and other wildlife.

The Jack Creek sale may be just the first volley in a series of battles over planned timber sales in Bridger-Teton. Thirteen other sales are being considered in the Gros Ventre Ranger District.

Wyo. coal slurry slowed by suits

Lawsuits and lobbying by Wyoming and South Dakota officials may slow plans for moving coal by slurry pipeline from Wyoming's Powder River Basin to points south.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management released in July its final environmental impact statement on the export of one million acre-feet of water over the next 50 years to Louisiana through a 1,664-mile-long pipeline to be constructed by Energy Transportation Systems, Inc. of San Francisco (see **HCN**, 2-20-81).

The study concluded that pumping more than 20,000 acre-feet of water a year from the Madison Formation will send water levels in Edgemont's municipal well field plummeting 290 feet. Drawdowns in wells in a 2,100-square-mile area of southeastern Wyoming and southwestern South Dakota will exceed 200 feet.

The flow of the Cheyenne River, which is already substantially appropriated to users, and the average flows of Cascade Springs and Hot Springs, would decline significantly. Water levels in shallower, confined aquifers, on which ranchers and farmers depend, would drop nearly as much as the Madison.

In the Black Hills, any additional reductions in stream and river flows could mean death for fish and wildlife; the study states, however, that the "magnitude of the impact cannot be determined with the available data." The report was also inconclusive on the project's impact on agriculture, but said "it is likely that if the changes in flow rates do occur there could be some impact experienced by the agricultural sector."

More than 6,000 acres of woodland would be lost forever, the study says. Wildlife, aquatic life and vegetation would also be "irretrievably lost" during project construction.

Finally, the study concluded that the pipeline project could result in a trend toward moving large volumes of water from areas where water is scarce to areas where water is more abundant. While the study points out that ETSI has agreed to compensate any existing water user affected by the pumping, water experts argue the difficulty of proving cause and effect between ETSI's pumping and a dry well miles away.

A third party agreement signed by ETSI and Wyoming gives the company two years to assess such problems. "By that time, you might as well say goodbye to residents and livestock," said Wyoming conservationist Paul Stuart. The state has asked that the time frame be reduced to two months.

South Dakota Assistant Attorney General Daniel Doyle said that the state has asked the Interior Department to deny ETSI the necessary federal permits. If the permits are issued, the state will go through an administrative appeal process, with the ultimate decision resting with the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior. The state does not now plan to file suit, Doyle said.

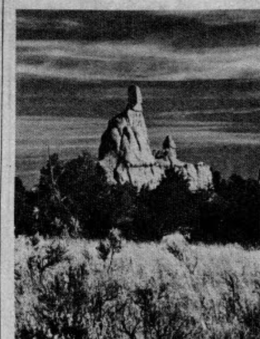
Lawsuits are being prepared by the city of Newcastle, Wyo., Fall River County, S.D., and several other municipalities in the area. "We don't want to stop the pipeline project," said Newcastle Mayor Louis Carlson. "We just don't want them taking our drinking water from the Black Hills watershed."

Meanwhile, Wyoming Gov. Ed Herschler and the governors of South Dakota, Nebraska and Montana still await a reply to a letter sent in May to Interior Secretary James Watt asking him to defer granting ETSI federal permits until a more thorough study could be made of alternatives, such as the feasibility of utilizing a closed loop system to return water from the pipeline in Louisiana to the High Plains or the possibility of constructing the West River Aqueduct from the Missouri River.

George Coffey, a spokesman for ETSI, said that the consortium is "committed to the water-slurry option." Other techniques of slurrying the coal — with methanol, liquid carbon dioxide or crude oil, for example — "are not demonstrated yet," he said. Regarding the West River Aqueduct, ETSI "continues to view it as an alternate source. There are possible ways of doing it economically," he said. The closed-loop system has consistently been rejected by ETSI as too expensive, and railroads are not cost-effective over the long term, the company says.

A decision on the project from Secretary Watt is expected this fall. Construction is slated to start in two years and the project could be in operation by 1985.

— V.M. Kahn



Utah wild appeal

The Utah Wilderness Association has filed an appeal with the Interior Board of Land Appeals attacking the Bureau of Land Management's exclusion of 925,000 acres of Utah lands from wilderness consideration. The appeal runs 1,420 pages, and is believed to be the largest wilderness appeal ever made.

The appeal involves eight areas altogether, but most of the acreage is in three — the Kaiparowits Plateau, Henry Mountains and Book Cliffs. About 600,000 of the BLM-rejected acres are in those three regions. Utah Wilderness Association director Dick Carter said, "Every one of these lands is controversial. They represent the highest controversy on minerals, especially the Kaiparowits Plateau. Almost all of them have been leased extensively for coal development." Carter said that whenever there was any mineral conflict, BLM simply dropped the area from wilderness consideration.

Officials at Interior said that they have not had time to review the appeal yet and the process is expected to take a long time. The appeal includes affadavits from 120 people who have studied or hiked through the areas. The association is challenging the BLM's interpretation of the criteria for "outstanding opportunity for solitude," and "primitive or unconfined recreation."

Synfuels shelved

Financing uncertainties have forced Panhandle Eastern Corp. to shelve plans to build a coal gasification plant near Douglas, Wyo. Panhandle Eastern and its partners — Pacific Gas and Electric Co. of California, and Ruhrgas Aktiengesellschaft of West Germany — have suspended several engineering contracts for the $2.7 billion venture.

The companies have asked the U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation for a loan guarantee of $1.7 billion, but a company spokesman said that uncertainties about federal assistance and future policies on synthetic gas made further investment unjustified.

The SFC was created during the Carter administration to assist the infant synfuels industry with financing. A Department of Energy loan guarantee has been granted to the Great Plains Gasification Project in North Dakota, but President Ronald Reagan has been slow to appoint a board of directors to the agency. While this should be done by mid-September, it could take as long as six months for them to decide on funding for new projects.

Western Roundup

Idaho Department of Commerce and Development

New federal timber push could sway local plans

When Louisiana Pacific Corp. laid off 220 Montana mill workers two weeks ago, company officials assured the loggers that help from the Reagan administration was on its way. In the short run, the industry anticipates a lowering of interest rates that will reverse the current housing market slump.

The forest industry is also seeking long term help, however, and in a major philosophical departure from previous federal policy, the Reagan administration appears ready to back as much as a doubling of current harvest levels on the national forests. A battle over policy is brewing in local forest offices.

The U.S. Forest Service will sell nearly 11 billion board feet in fiscal year 1982, some one-fifth of the expected harvest from both public and private lands. But Norman Gould, the agency's director for timber management in Washington, D.C., said that harvest level could easily triple to 32 billion board feet.

"It's possible to cut that high in a still environmentally sound manner," he said. "Even when you plug in other management constraints, including wildlife habitat, we realistically still have a potential (annual) cut of 20 to 25 billion board feet."

The agency may not reach that goal, however, if others involved have their way. Congress and administration budget cutters are reluctant to give the Forest Service the funds to manage such sales, which are net federal money losers. (Next year's timber cut is down one billion board feet from the level approved by Congress for 1981.)

Conservationists argue that even the current harvest levels impinge on other forest resources. Even the forest industry is asking for less than a doubling of sales, escalating to 19 billion board feet a year by the year 2020, according to John Hall, Vice President for resources for the National Forest Products Association.

The long term planning is obscured by the current supply glut. Al Sample of The Wilderness Society's forest program said there's no sense in talking about increases while there is still a backlog of sold, but uncut timber (now at some 30 billion board feet nationally).

"That's this week," said Hall. "Over the years, the demand for housing will require substantial increases in cuts."

Conservationists and industry also remain divided on management problems in privately-owned forests. With less than one-half of the total forest land, private lands supply 72 percent of the national stumpage.

That harvest level is "too intense," said Hall. To avoid future overcutting of private lands, he said, higher cuts are needed on the public forests. But to Sample, overcutting on private lands indicates a "lack of commitment" to environmental quality and a sustainable commodity program. "I have only marginal faith that they'd allow a comeback in private forests given more public timber to cut," he said.

Despite federal policies, however, much of the word on timber cuts will come from local forest managers, in whom Congress has vested major decision-making powers.

Regional management plans finished in July leave specific timber harvest goals up to the local forests. Local timber plans are being targeted by both conservationists and industry lobbyists, with agency officials in Washington having "some say," said Gould. "The pressure from all sides is going to be intense," predicted Sample.

Resource school criticized for environmental bias

Nobody had ever complained about private or non-profit grants before. But when an avowed environmentalist announced a grant to the University of Idaho and Washington State University this year, the questions flew.

The grant was initiated by actor Robert Redford, an environmental activist, and supported by Cecil Andrus, a former Secretary of the Interior who is now a director of the National Wildlife Federation. The two men put together a fund-raising effort to establish a $5 to $6 million endowment for a new multi-disciplinary program at the two universities.

Announcing the Institute for Resource Management program last February, Redford described it as a "strong, broad-based program that will provide sound training for those who will manage the nation's resources."

"I have been seeing two dire positions develop that are false, two extreme points of view," Redford said. "There's a need for a balanced, orderly approach to our environment that recognizes both the need for development and our responsibility to protect our resources."

But when the program came up for approval in June before the state board of education, there were protests. Six Idaho organizations released a letter protesting the program and its funding. The organizations included the Idaho Wool Growers, the American Trout Growers, the Idaho Cattlemen's Association, the Greater Snake River Land Use Congress, the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation and Consulting Associates, a Boise lobbying firm.

The letter asked whether the Institute for Resource Management could be considered independent and impartial if funding came from environmentalist groups and individuals.

The debate raged in letters to the editors columns for many weeks. One side charged that Idaho students and faculty would no doubt end up taking part in environmental lawsuits against the state and its agencies. The other side said that a long-range planning perspective, to be nurtured by the Institute, is needed to counteract the "what can I get out of the land in one generation" approach to resource management.

The state board reviewed the program and found it acceptable. "I am not interested in any program if there are strings attached," University President Richard Gibb said.

Gibb noted that the protests were the first of their kind. No one has questioned numerous other grants received by the university for similar projects, including grants from mining and agricultural companies, he said.

— Jeanette Germain

Ma Bell routs rural box routes

It may not portend a new age, but a new addressing system creeping over the Rocky Mountain region is razing an age old rural tradition. Soon, Star Route 1, Box 104 may be no more.

Mountain Bell, joined by Pacific Power and Light and other local utilities, is quietly traveling the back roads of the West. Armed with a stack of plaques, and — usually — the consent of the rural resident, the firm is distributing brand new address numbers of the sort until now reserved for city dwellers.

To every mile of country lane a 100-series is assigned, averaging one number per 52.8 feet. The numbers begin at the nearest major intersection. Thus, if you live 11.5 miles from Hudson's Corner, your new street number will be 1150. If your road is nameless, Mountain Bell will even give you a name.

"There are a couple of people in every county who oppose it," said Charlie Edwards, project director for Mountain Bell in Cheyenne, Wyo. "But I can't figure why. Everyone will benefit."

The new system, said Edwards, will enable fire trucks, ambulances, and even the Maytag repairman to espy rural residents with greater speed. For Mountain Bell, it'll mean easier record-keeping, while the post office will find it handy for delivering mail.

Housing developers may also find the system useful, as plenty of numerical room is left between present residences. No need to re-assign box numbers every time a family builds a new country home.

Mountain Bell has already transformed 49 counties in Colorado, 10 in Wyoming, and is gearing up for Utah and four other western states this winter. Revamping Wyoming's Laramie County (5,000 rural residents) cost $130,000, paid by Mountain Bell.

Wyoming sets pact with NRC

A year and a half after butting heads, Wyoming and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) have nearly settled the issue of jurisdiction over uranium development. The agreement could set a precedent for other states.

Controversy arose last year when the state stopped the Western Nuclear Corp. from extending the tailings dam at its Split Rock site. The extension had been approved by the NRC. Since then, the two governments have been working to clarify their respective jurisdictions to prevent duplication and inconsistency.

The NRC will continue issuing permits for uranium mills in Wyoming because the state has no agreement designating itself as the regulatory authority. But under the new pact, the NRC will use state standards and requirements for water quality, monitoring, and excursion limits as conditions for in situ uranium licenses within Wyoming.

NRC has also recognized Wyoming's jurisdiction over the non-radiological effects of uranium mill tailings, which sparked the initial dispute between the two government bodies.

The memorandum, when signed, is expected to help industry avoid sometimes conflicting regulations, and settle jurisdiction questions by giving authority to whichever body has the most expertise and is closest to the uranium development activity.

— Marjane Ambler

New search finds lost royalties

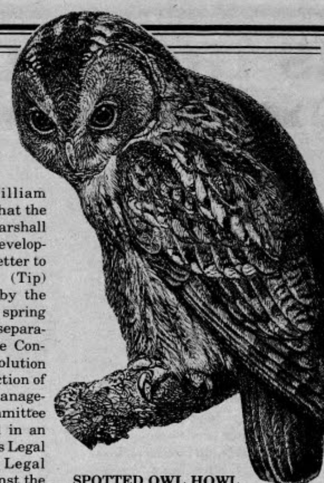
The Wyoming state auditor's office has completed its first audit of mineral royalty payments owed to the state. The audit covered a very small natural gas producing unit operated by Damson Resources. The amount recovered was small — about $5,400 — but according to audit supervisor Randy Feteroff, "It represents a large recovery relative to the size of the field."

In a statement to the state Farm Loan Board, State Auditor Jim Griffith said, "The audit group is critical of the state's royalty accounting system. It has not kept up with the tremendous increase in mineral activities." Griffith said the committee will concentrate on units in which federal royalties — a portion of which go to the state — have been delinquent.

The state is severely limited by funds. The legislature appropriated only enough money to hire three auditors for the mineral audits. However, in addition to the recovery at the Damson field, the auditors have already discovered another apparent discrepancy at the Hartzog Draw field in Campbell County, operated by Cities Service. Preliminary reports indicate that an additional $381,000 in royalties may be owed, half of which would go to the states. The auditor's office will ask the 1982 legislature for more funding to pursue the program.

Though the state audits are just beginning, investigations by **High Country News** (HCN, 2-6-81) indicate that the state may be owed several million dollars in back royalties and taxes.

hotline



BOB BAN ILLEGAL?

U.S. Attorney General William French Smith said last month that the withdrawal of Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness from oil and gas development is unconstitutional. In a letter to House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill, Smith said the vote by the House Interior Committee last spring to protect the Bob violated the separation of powers provisions of the Constitution. The committee's resolution invoked a previously-unused section of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which said the committee could make such a withdrawal in an emergency. The Mountain States Legal Foundation and the Pacific Legal Foundation have filed suit against the Interior and Agriculture Departments, saying former MSLF chief and now Interior Secretary James Watt should disobey the committee's order because it is unconstitutional.

WEIGHING WATER OPTIONS

The Wyoming Water Development Commission has announced it is bowing to public pressure in its decision to examine alternatives to the design of the controversial Stage III Little Snake water project. (Cheyenne voters this month will decide the fate of a related water project called Stage II.) But the stress is on the word design: the panel is only considering three options, all of which involve considerable waterworks construction. One choice even increases the water supply provided by the original design. Evidently the panel will not consider the environmentalists' preferred "no build" alternative, which would rely on water conservation efforts to meet new demands.

WHOOPERS TAKE A DIVE

The endangered whooping crane lost ground this summer on its generally successful road to recovery, reports the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Burdened by drought and cold weather, all five of the whoopers transplanted to sandhill crane nests at Grays Lake refuge in Idaho have died. The experimental flock, raised by the sandhills, now numbers 17. Bad weather is also believed to have hurt the larger, established flock of whoopers that summers in northwestern Canada.

SODA ASH BASH

Rock Springs and Green River, Wyo., would experience another surge of growth and the Flaming Gorge recreation area would suffer if the soda ash industry in southwestern Wyoming expands, according to a report from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The BLM's Rock Springs office recently released an environmental assessment which studied seven possible courses of development for the area, in line with plans by the agency to lease more soda ash operations in the Farson-Eden area and possible expansion of existing trona operations near Green River. Expansion south of the existing plants could affect water and air quality around Flaming Gorge, and loss of critical winter habitat for antelope.

SPOTTED OWL HOWL

Old-growth timber, the usual target of timber sales on national forest lands, is prime habitat for the northern spotted owl, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is arguing that some of it ought to be saved. The brown-and-white-spotted bird needs 1,000 acres of woodland for habitat, and if the Forest Service accepts the FWS argument it could cost the timber industry $1 billion in lost public lands timber. The owls are listed as threatened in Oregon only, but timber industry folks are calling it the snail darter of the forests.

COMPLY IF YOU CAN

Coal mine operators will be reprieved from meeting a 90-day time limit for correcting certain mining violations, the federal Office of Surface Mining has announced. Operators will be given extensions if the permit process is held up in Washington, D.C., for any reason, if lawsuits or other court proceedings are involved, or if a labor dispute or climatic conditions prevent the operator from correcting the violation. One, and possibly two, 90-day extensions may be given, under the new rules.

UNSUITABLE RULES

Fears among environmentalists over planned revision of federal strip mine regulations may be exaggerated, according to **Coal Week**, an industry newsletter. Early drafts of reclamation revisions leave "unsuitability criteria" for leasing federal coal essentially unchanged. The new regs would relax rules requiring energy companies to develop their leases quickly; but criteria for judging wildlife needs and protection of alluvial valley floors are so far intact.

OIL SLEUTHS RESIGN

Three detectives who worked on an investigation of oil thefts on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming for the Bureau of Land Management resigned their posts to protest upper echelon meddling in the investigation. In a copyrighted story in the **Denver Post**, agent John Dean said shifting the investigation from the BLM to the Interior Department has "blown it. They've missed the big people and gotten a few little ones. The investigation won't amount to a hill of beans." Three major oil companies have so far been implicated for failing to report and pay royalties on oil pumped from the reservation.

barbed wire

And it feels good when they stop, too. President Ronald Reagan defended Interior Secretary James Watt's approach to environmental policy by saying, "It's a little bit like getting a mule's attention — you hit it in the head with a two-by-four first."

Getting the bugs out. According to **Montana Outdoors**, the best way out of the energy crunch might be as simple as making a bunch of beetles uneasy. "Oil beetles," the magazine reports, ooze oil from their leg joints when disturbed. Just telling the beetles that we plan to use them as an energy source might cause an unprecedented oil glut.

"Members of Congress don't know BLM from BM."

— Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.)

Well, for god's sake, don't tell the highway lobby. The U.S. Corps of Engineers boasts that the amount of dirt excavated from the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway is sufficient to build a two-lane highway to the moon.

The Bare Facts. The U.S. Interior Department has forbidden department employees from granting interviews to reporters from magazines that feature naked or thinly-clad women, including **Playboy** and **Penthouse**. There is no rule yet on whether interviewees may be naked or thinly-clad during interviews with **Reader's Digest**.

While many of us watched in paralyzed awe as corporate giants went to war over Conoco, the oil conglomerate in the mood for merger, the state of Montana got right to work — ringing the cash register. With Seagram Company of Canada and DuPont fighting to take over the oil giant, the Montana Board of Investments sold its Conoco stock to Seagram at a hefty profit of about $40 per share. For 13,766 shares, that makes $612,000 profit. Who says these bureaucrats can't manage money?

Ag loans face dollar drought

by Michael Moss

DENVER — When Senate Bill 452 won the governor's signature this summer, a proud cheer circulated through Colorado. The little guy, it seemed, had finally won one.

Dubbed the Colorado Agricultural Development Authority, the new program would channel sorely needed capital to the agricultural community. Most of the financial nourishment would go to ailing small operators and dejected young farmers unable to make a start. Or so said the program's advocates.

But prior to the loan board's first meeting, the program has three counts against it. Money market watchers say the tax-free bonds to be used by the loan authority are not likely to attract buyers unless interest rates fall. The Farmers Home Administration — a major bond guarantor — may stop backing new agricultural loans. And the Internal Revenue Service ruled last week that henceforth, the bonds to be used in the program can no longer be marketed in clumps.

Missing those ingredients, the program will flop like a surprised souffle. But even if the scheme succeeds, it may prove controversial.

Large, already successful farmers will reap most of the low-interest loans. Little will be left for the small or beginning farmer, who'll continue to pose a high risk to investors. And the primary beneficiaries of the program may not be the recipients, but rather the investors and their brokers who worked behind the scenes for the bill's passage.

A FREE LUNCH

"It's a triumph for family agriculture," said John Stencel of the bill's success. His staff at the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union in Denver had joined the Colorado Department of Agriculture to vigorously lobby for the legislation.

Noting agriculture's struggle with high interest rates, and capitalizing on public sentiment favoring young and small farmers, lobbyists had stressed the need for cheaper money and emphasized the program's potential as a "tool to bring more people into agriculture." For the benefit of urban listeners, the bill's sponsor, State Senator Ray Powers (R-Colorado Springs) added that it will "help hold down food costs."

The legislation sets up a seven-member board that will issue state bonds to create a loan pool for farmers purchasing land and equipment. One or more private brokerage firms will market the bonds. Local lending institutions like banks and credit associations will distribute the loans. The board will run the whole show, setting guidelines for both bond sales and loans.

The vital ingredient to the scheme is the state revenue bond — uniquely exempt from state and federal taxes. Until recently, such bonds have financed hordes of public projects such as highways, sewers and hospitals. They're attractive to high-income, 50 percent tax bracket taxpayers seeking tax shelters. And they're attractive to state and local officials, who lose at most minimal revenues from avoided taxes (the federal government is the big loser) and assume no legal risk from the sale of bonds.

Today, however, the "free lunch" money bonds are in trouble. Investors, reports the **Wall Street Journal**, are less interested in the low-earning bonds, finding more profitable shelter elsewhere. And the feds, tired of losing revenues from avoided taxes (as much as $2 billion this year from tax-free bonds according to some estimates), are considering drastic cutbacks on the uses of tax-exempt bonds. The House ways and means oversight subcommittee has recommended an immediate ban on the sale of bonds for several purposes, including agricultural financing.

The most serious blow has been dealt by the IRS. The agency ruled Aug. 24 that it would no longer be legal to market bonds in bunches. Until now, states, through their agents, have saved paperwork costs by selling $1 million unit bonds in packages as large as $100 million.

Observers are hesitant to predict the ruling's effect on agricultural bonds. Oversight panel staffer Bess Kuntz said it could knock the programs cold.

But still optimistic is E.F. Hutton. Vice President Gary Gray in Philadelphia, whose staff has initiated agricultural bond programs in 17 states (including Colorado), said those states are angry and have appealed the IRS ruling. Should they fail, Gray said the firm may find an alternative marketing scheme that will salvage the programs. Kuntz agreed that if anyone can play a trump card, it is E.F. Hutton.

NO PANACEA

The proliferation and misuse of revenue bonds in general was one reason State Rep. Frank Randall (R-Colorado Springs) opposed the program, holding the bill in his rules committee until a "sunset" provision was attached mandating a legislative review in three years.

Also unenthused was Buford Rice, manager of the Colorado Farm Bureau, the conservative counterpart to the Farmers Union. "This thing is like mother, God and country," he said, "and our stand wasn't popular even with some of our members. But emotions aside, it's unclear whether it's a workable program. It's certainly no panacea."

Tight money is today's loudest complaint from the agricultural community. Rising operating expenses such as fertilizer have sent nearly everyone in search of new loans. But stagnating market prices for agricultural products are making bankers and other lenders leery of the risk in agricultural loans. When a farmer can get money, the interest is usually at least prime rate — now the mid-teens — and up to 21 percent.

Rice stressed that he agreed high interest rates were hurting farmers. What disturbed him, he said, was the program's focus on land and equipment purchases, rather than operating expenses. "We're talking about a subsidized program to bring more people into a market that for wheat, anyway, is already flooded," he said. The Bureau opposed the bill.

Both Rice and Randall also objected to the new government entity the program would create. "A handful of people not elected will have the power to say who can farm where and what in this state," said Randall. "I'm not too eager to give out that power."

A HARD BOTTOM-LINE

The seven board members were chosen by State Legislature leaders last month — three bankers, a former representative, a school teacher, and a dairy association leader. All have on-the-farm experience, raising cows or growing grain. The seventh is a governor-appointed administration staffer in charge of state budget matters. By law, only four members are of the majority Republican party.

The strongest financial credentials are held by Rodney Uhrich. Uhrich has handled agricultural loans for 17 years, the last 12 for the First National Bank of Denver, where he is now in charge of credit policy. His family has farmed in northern Colorado for most of this century.

Uhrich is optimistic about the program's success. An associate at his bank, Walt Kane, had previously managed the Colorado Housing Finance Authority, after which the agricultural program was patterned. That system, said Uhrich, had been highly effective.

Deciding who'll get the farm loans, however, is going to be a "sensitive point," he predicted. "We'll have to think about the farmer's ability to pay the bonds back," he said. "If we take losses, it would be a black eye for us."

Despite the rhetoric from lobbyists, the program as passed does not specify in any way that loans should go to small or beginning farmers. "We'll form the criteria," said Uhrich.

The typically dismal financial portfolios of small or beginning farmers have kept many from obtaining guaranteed loans even from the Farmers Home Administration. Supporters of the Colorado loan program had hoped to channel many of the loans

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Mike McClure

For the small farmer, "It's going to be tough."

— Steve Bell, bond broker

through FmHA, capitalizing on its ability to assume more losses by financing higher risk farmers.

But new Reagan administration policy may forbid the FmHA from further loan guarantees, said Colorado FmHA Acting Director Ed Smith. Without the FmHA, agricultural bonds may be harder to sell, with tighter restrictions on their use.

That leaves banks and other private lenders, whose first question to a farmer is: What are your assets? For the small guy or beginner, that's usually a stumper, answered by a sigh.

That imbalance between a large and small operator's ability to obtain loans worries Jeff Weispfennig, a finance expert with the North Dakota Agriculture Department. North Dakota also started an agricultural loan program this year. While he predicts small or beginning farmers will get "a share" of the loans, Weispfennig also concedes "good business sense" will incline local bankers to finance established farmers.

"I'm also afraid the interest rate will still be out of reach for the average small farmer's portfolio," he said. North Dakota's program, he said, should provide loans at 12 to 13 percent interest. "That's only a quarter of a percent interest below FmHA's," he said. "And that's beyond many farmers."

WILL THE REAL WINNER...

While farm beginners compete with old timers, and little guys buck large operators for a share of the money market, one person stands to gain from a successful program regardless of who wins: the broker.

The board has not yet chosen. But there's only one candidate to underwrite the bond program: E.F. Hutton, in association with Hanifen, Imhoff, Inc. of Denver, a brokerage firm.

A broker's fee for marketing bonds varies. It's usually one-quarter to one-half percent of the total bond.

Steve Bell, an agent for Hanifen, Imhoff, shares board member Uhrich's optimism the program will succeed. He has also grappled personally with the loan recipient problem.

"We're not trying to finance conglomerate farming," he said. "That's not our intent. Our intent is to finance small farmers for small parcel acquisition." But Bell, like Uhrich, is equally familiar with the hard market realities. For the small farmer, he says, "It's going to be tough."

Word of the Colorado farm loan program may not have circulated far onto the grange. One person who has heard, however, is Chuck Roth, and he'd like a loan.

With his wife Linda, Roth grows alfalfa, cows and elephant garlic in the Roaring Fork Valley near Aspen, Colo. He wants to buy a new cream separator for his tiny dairy, as well as a horse-drawn sickle bar to cut hay.

There are hundreds of Chuck Roths in Colorado — small farmers wrestling to implant themselves successfully in the soil — and they're the center of the agricultural community's most virulent debate. Can the little guy survive? Should we encourage new farmers to start? Or is money spent on them like so much spring runoff, wasted on high risk ventures destined to go belly-up? The Chuck Roths add emotion to an already perplexing scene.

Simon Ortiz

by Dede Feldman

"We have been told many things," says Acoma poet and activist Simon Ortiz, "but we know this to be true: the land and the people."

These gentle words are at the core of a new book of poetry with the not-so-gentle title **Fight Back**. The collection of poems was written by Simon Ortiz in commemoration of the Pueblo Revolt against the Spanish in 1680, but it draws heavily on the more recent history of energy development in the mineral rich belt that surrounds several of New Mexico's southern pueblos. The skinny red volume, published by the Institute of Native American American Development at the University of New Mexico, is but the latest in a steady stream of poetry and prose produced by Ortiz, who is rapidly becoming one of the nation's foremost Indian writers.

"We tried to get a federal grant to help celebrate the revolt," Ortiz said jokingly at an Albuquerque poetry reading held during last year's tricentennial celebration of the successful revolt. "But the federal government wasn't interested, and we had to rely on volunteer groups in each of the pueblos."

Ortiz's humor and optimism are characteristic of his poetry. Ortiz himself chalks it up to his home community, Aacqu, or what the white man calls Acoma, the Sky City.

Actually, Ortiz was raised in McCartys, a railroad town 65 miles west of Albuquerque, one of several small villages in the Acoma community. As a boy, Ortiz grew up with the legacy of Spanish conquest and Aacqumeh slavery. Many of his pueblo's choice agricultural lands along the Rio San Jose had been taken by the railroad; others had been taken over by the "Mericano" in a hundred different ways. Cautioned by his father never to work for the railroad, when he graduated from high school he took a job in the area's largest uranium mill,

Dede Feldman

"for the sake of the land

At Mesa Verde, not long ago,
they had Esther in a glass case.
She was a child, born
from a woman, 1000 years ago.
The U.S. Park Service was reluctant to let her go
when some Indian people
demanded her freedom.
Government bureaucrats
said Indians were insensitive
to U.S. heritage.
For years, they sold
postcards of Esther.
Maybe they still do.
By pushing buttons, thousands
of yearly tourists to these places
can get an audio-taped narration.

See Museum For More Information.

from **No More Sacrifices**

owned by Kerr-McGee.

"My father liked to sing in the Acoma language, in English and Spanish," Ortiz recalls, "and I used to like to listen to far away radio stations in Albuquerque, El Paso and Del Rio, Texas."

Ortiz says that country and western music, the beat poets, Walt Whitman and Carl Sandburg influenced him greatly during this period. All of them were, in one way or another, stories about common men and women — all part of a larger oral tradition. And while Ortiz himself is involved in both the study and continuation of the Native American oral tradition and teaches traditional Native American literature at the University of New Mexico, he believes everyone has an oral tradition that is, in some way, an affirmation of life.

Why did Ortiz write a series of poems about the unlikely topic of uranium mining, and cap it off with the polemical title **Fight Back**?

According to Ortiz, poetry and politics overlap when a culture is under seige.

"I don't claim to be a political spokesman," says Ortiz, "but...an affirmation of a culture is, to various degrees, political."

Often this affirmation involves struggle and resistance to an alien culture. In 1680 the alien culture was the Spanish conquistador. Today, it is a complex form of economic exploitation that poses a more subtle threat to Indian health, land and water, Ortiz says.

The huge red and orange mesa that is called Sky City is only one of several unique geological formations that dot the desert between Albuquerque and Gallup. Others include underground formations that hold 50 percent of the nation's uranium reserves and 11 percent of the nation's strippable coal supply. Sixteen of the country's largest energy corporations are digging into these underground formations, mining and milling ore which is shipped out to be processed, enriched and used elsewhere. In the process, the companies are depleting the area's underground aquifers at the rate of 35,000-50,000 acre-feet each year; the "dewatering" is necessary because the valuable ore formations are surrounded by aquifers. It may spell disaster for local agriculture, says Ortiz.

Many of those who work in the mines and mills are work-hungry Indians from the Navajo nation, Acoma and Laguna Pueblos, who, like Ortiz, were unaware of the potential health hazards of uranium. Others are Midwesterners, Canadians and hard rock miners from around the country who make up the transient populations of the area's boomtown, Grants, N.M. Grants, the uranium capital of the world, is the scene of many of **Fight Back**'s poems, and local miners are some of the main characters.

But the real subject of **Fight Back** is resistance.

"Fighting back is no more than what the people have already done," says Ortiz. "They did it in the Pueblo revolt and many of the same religious, political and water issues are still alive today."

For Ortiz, **Fight Back** is a continuation of oral tradition. "I write poetry because there are things that need to be said, things that piss me off or that I like and want others to notice. I want poetry to be inspirational too — to give courage and a sense of progress in whatever it may be, Native Americans working in the mines, on the picket line or fighting to survive in some other way."

Altogether, Ortiz has written seven books of poetry and prose including **The People Shall Continue**, **A Good Journey**, **Going for the Rain** and **Y'all Indians**. He recently completed **From Sand Creek**, which he says is a poetic study of violence in America, and he is developing a text on Native American literature.

"I want people to learn about the land — how precious it is to Indian people and how much a relationship between the people and the land must be nurtured. Of course," Ortiz adds "this doesn't just apply to Indian land in New Mexico, but to land everywhere."

and all people..."

Standing again
with all things
that have been in the past,
that are in the present,
and that will be in the future
we acknowledge ourselves
to be in a relationship that is responsible
and proper, that is loving and compassionate,
for the sake of the land and all people:
we ask humbly of the creative forces of life
that we be given a portion
with which to help ourselves so that our struggle
and work will also be creative
for the continuance of life,
Standing again, within, among all things
we ask in all sincerity, for hope, courage, peace,
strength, vision, unity and continuance.

from **Mid-America Prayer**
© Simon Ortiz 1980

Crazy Gook Indians

Danny and Emmett got back from Vietnam
and went to work in the mines.
Danny said, In Section 30
one afternoon, we blasted
and my partner, Emmett, thought
we were back in Vietnam,
back in the tunnels,
after the enemy, you know.
He picked up that drill
like it was an M-60
and tried to defend us against
the shift boss who'd been in the Marines too.
I got Emmett quieted down
and held him in my arms for a while.
The boss just laughed and
later on I heard him laughing
with the superintendent
about the crazy gook Indians
on his shift.
I guess I should have let my partner
defend us against that Marine.

© Simon Ortiz 1980

A spiderweb of rail lines and sidelines

Many Montanans think of the Burlington Northern as the outfit that is systematically tearing up the trackage in their own backyards. Businessmen in small towns along the highline see BN as an army of ogres eager to slash service at tiny elevators and drive what little trade there is on down the track. The Governor of Montana has called BN an 'octopus' whose writhing tentacles threaten grain exporters with a strangling grip. BN has become a favorite target of the farflung Montana press. Grain growers are suing BN over alleged discriminatory rates.

But whether or not BN indeed wears a black hat instead of a more benign striped engineer's cap, and whether it has shortcomings in the art of diplomacy and a sense of fair play, there is one truth about the green giant that no one can deny: In an age characterized by a failing rail transportation industry, BN is a veritable success express.

In their message to stockholders in the 1980 annual report, BN Chairman Louis Menk and President Richard Bressler said of their corporation: "The winds of change have been kind to Burlington Northern."

Much of the good news in the report to shareholders had little to do with hauling grain. More and more these days, talk at BN headquarters in St. Paul Minn., centers around expansion into oil and gas, coal and minerals, forest products and manufacturing, freight forwarding, land development and real estate. *Diversification, BN leaders* loudly declare, is the key to future profits.

Burlington Northern is now a conglomerate of eight separate companies — including trucking; air freight forwarding (second largest in the nation); forest products and manufacturing (BN is the twelfth largest private owner of forest lands in the U.S.); oil and gas (BN owns rights on more than 7.5 million acres of land); coal and minerals (BN owns nearly 15 billion tons of economically recoverable coal in Montana, North Dakota, the Midwest and Canada); and land development and real estate (BN manages more than 1.2 million acres of grazing lands and 32,000 acres of irrigable lands — much of it in eastern Montana).

But BN is doing quite all right as a railroad, too. In 1970, Burlington Northern became the nation's longest system with the merger of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, the Great Northern Railway, Northern Pacific Railway and another, smaller rail company. Just last year, BN annexed another 4,507 miles of trackage with purchase of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway.

Today, BN is lord of a spiderweb of gleaming tracks near 30,000 miles long — stretching from Vancouver, British Columbia in the Northwest to Pensacola, Florida, in the southeast. When a BN train chugged into Birmingham, Alabama last December from its origin at Portland, Oregon, it had traveled 3,076 miles, making that the longest freight haul over a single railroad's lines in the history of the nation.

Burlington Northern employs some 57,000 people in the 25 states and two Canadian provinces it serves. Executives of some of the more prestigious firms in the country sit on its Board of Directors, including International Harvester Co., Westmoreland Coal, Weyerhauser Co., and General Mills, Inc.

In 1980, net income rose by 27 percent from the year before to more than $223 million dollars on gross revenues of around four billion dollars. The rail pre-tax income alone — from primarily coal and grain — skyrocketed by more than 300 percent from the previous year to just over $165 million.

Any way you choose to look at it, Burlington Northern is a vigorously healthy railroad which, largely due to its many other holdings, has made the steep financial grade that others failed to climb. But many agricultural officials worry that BN's very success may eventually lead it away from its commitments to shippers of agricultural products in Montana and elsewhere.

Others in agriculture believe that even within the rail function of BN, agricultural commodities may soon take a back seat to haulage of coal. Coal is now BN's leading traffic volume producer. In 1980, coal traffic revenues jumped by 25 percent to more than 82 billion ton miles. That is more than half of all revenue ton miles generated by the railroad.

But to those who charge that BN is turning its broad back on grain shippers, BN spokesman Bill Joplin replies firmly, "We have a big investment in them (the grain shippers) too. We are not going to sell that down the river."

Certainly, to date, BN cannot be accused of ignoring the grain hauling aspect of its rail function. In 1980, for example, BN proudly boasts that it moved more than one billion bushels of grain — an achievement it says, that is unsurpassed by any railroad in U.S. history. In addition, BN acquired 3,324 covered hopper cars from 1977-80, bringing its hopper fleet up to 23,000 cars — almost one per mile of trackage that BN owns. The company plans 1,000 more hopper cars this year.

All told, BN is the nation's largest grain hauler. Its own estimates are that it commands a 20 percent share of national rail grain traffic. Other grain industry leaders peg the figure as high as 40 percent, which means, they say, that BN can pretty well call the shots when it comes to rate increases (subject to ICC approval only if they rise above the allowed-up-to 175 percent increase by 1984 as outlined in the Staggers Rail Act) and implementation of such controversial moves as the unit train concept.

Ultimately, the question of whether BN will treat agricultural shippers fairly and remain attentive to their needs can only be answered by Burlington Northern.

Through its recent dissolution into eight separate corporate entities, BN now has the means to tip-toe out of the rail business if, at some point, that seems the prudent move. True, the ICC still hovers over BN like a fussy matron, trying to keep its massive ward in line. But no agency — federal or otherwise — can guarantee that a corporation will consult its conscience as well as its computers when it comes time to choose between the shareholders and the public it serves should the going get tough.

Farmers are worried. Says Montana National Farmers Organization President Don Johannsen, "We have a new situation in this country which we have never had before. Burlington Northern either directly or indirectly has control over nearly 40 percent of the economic well-being of this country. The question is — and perhaps this will have to be addressed at the national level with appropriate legislation: When do we say, even demand, that BN has an obligation to this **country** as well as to its stockholders. That it is about time it show some signs of a social conscience."

— Terry L. Shorb

Super-trains...

(continued from page 1)

doubt that the unit train concept was here to stay, and since BN has a working monopoly of rail freight service in Montana, it didn't take long for shrewd folks to figure that those who ended up building facilities to handle the giant trains would end up with most of the grain handling business.

Only one facility for 52-unit trains is now actually under construction in Montana, at Great Falls. The superterminal is owned by Montana Merchandizing, a private consortium of businessmen including the mayor of Great Falls. Early this month, the terminal will start handling one half million bushels of grain. Automatic car movers will tenderly push the BN hopper cars along to loading positions. Cars will be loaded at the rate of one every five and three-quarter minutes, or 35,000 bushels per hours. A 52-unit train with combined carrying capacity of 170,000 bushels can be loaded up and on its way to Portland in just under five hours.

Other hopeful rail plans submitted to BN corporate offices include superterminals by Peavy Co., General Mills, and GTA, a regional grain cooperative representing 150,000 farmers and ranchers nationwide.

"If you talk to the people who are already planning to construct those facilities, it looks like there will eventually be as many as 27 or 28," Joplin says.

Given even the furious shuffle of grain handling companies to plunge into the thick of super-terminal madness, however, it seems there may only be a dozen or more in the whole state when all is said and done.

So where farmers once hauled grain into handily available clapboard elevators, they will soon be looking at a mere sprinkling of terminuses and some long hauls over narrow old highways to get their grain to market.

Said Montana Farm Bureau's Mack Quinn, "I don't think anyone yet realizes what a tremendous impact this would have on our rural communities there's a chance some of these smaller elevators may be able to work something out to accommodate a 26-unit train, but the 52-unit trains or the huge costs associated with construction of a huge terminal with one mile of new trackage for loading are just out of reach of them."

CORPORATE ROOTS

The century-long relationship between farmers and the railroad in Montana has been a stormy one.

As the Northern Pacific first began pushing into Montana on its way westward, the company excited intrepid easterners with tall tales about the moderate climate and perfect growing soils of the western prairies. Many a naive tinhorn loaded up his belongings, paid the railroad the fare and headed for Montana territory with visions of palm trees and tropical sunsets dancing in his head.

Naturally, the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroads made lots of bucks on their little white lies and the NP stockholders looked forward to many profitable years of freighting in all of the goods that settlers in Montana territory would find themselves without.

T.J. Gilles, a Montana writer, said in his book, **When Tillage Begins**; "The railroads' interest in the (westward dry farming) movement was obvious. Thousands of farmers importing seeds and implements and exporting grain would mean more business than a handful of big ranches shipping beeves once a year."

An NP P.R. man gallivanted all over the country, inflaming would-be farmers with wondrous tales of the benefits of what he delicately termed "scientific farming." What that really meant, of course, was turning over the hard native sod. Prairies across north central Montana still bear the scars and erosive wounds of that great farming land-grab spree. Spur lines were built — sometimes only after the right rail official had received appropriate "reward" for approval — to accommodate the farmers whose produce must be shipped to distant ports if their dreams were to be realized.

A hundred years have passed since that time. But little has changed. Many farmers are still dependent upon railroads to haul their harvest to market. And though the NP and the Great Northern are long gone, those same lonely lines still web through the state — now, under the ownership of Bur-

Burlington Northern's Montana Railways

.... to be eliminated

lington Northern.

NO SIMPLE VIEW

Burlington Northern is taking much of the heat over railroad consolidation schemes, especially in Montana and North Dakota where the company dominates the shipping scene.

But farmers and ranchers throughout the Rocky Mountain region are struggling with transportation problems. The solutions that they and other policy-makers are dreaming up are not unlike BN's.

South Dakota owns most of its trackage. Yet it too is plagued by heavy financial losses. To make the state-owned system work, says South Dakota State University economist Charles Lamberton, traffic must be increased and new unit train super-terminals must be built.

In eastern Colorado, growers complained bitterly when the Rock Island Railroad went bankrupt several years ago. But when confronted with a proposal to purchase the tracks themselves, the growers balked, noting that for now shipping by truck was cheaper.

Throughout Colorado, John Dolan of the state Highways Department and other planning officials are in a quandary between choosing to boost ailing branch lines or resign the business to trucks.

Nationally, rail line abandonments have tripled since 1929 to a yearly average of 2,857 miles. Yet a recent study by the U.S. General Accounting Office found no evidence to blame grain elevator closures on rail abandonments.

Rather, the GAO found one case in Iowa where a farmer-owned cooperative built a new terminal 10 miles from an abandoned line. While there were some added trucking fees, farmers have benefitted from higher prices paid for their grain because the new terminal accommodates unit trains.

The GAO concluded that railroads, including BN, are turning to unit trains merely to compete with trucks and barges, that talk of corporate conspiracy is unfounded, and that a solution to agricultural transportation must emerge from a whole systems view — waterways, roads and ports, as well as railroads.

BLESSING IN DISGUISE?

At least one Montanan believes that rather than arguing the morality of what the railroad is doing to Montana shippers, farmers should be taking advantage of a unique opportunity this sweeping change now presents.

Gene Radermacher, a regionally known transportation consultant based in Billings, believes that in ordering a complete streamlining of its rail system, BN may have inadvertently handed shippers some control they have never had.

"There has been much opposition to the concept of a so-called super-terminal. Farmers are griping that that will just allow another bunch of big companies to come in and gobble up more of the farmers' profits. But, believe me, if there is money enough in this for, say, General Mills, to make a go of it, there is enough for a farmer-owned cooperative to do it too."

Radermacher said that consolidation of rail lines, centralization of grain railheads and established unit train rates all provide shippers with a hitherto undreamt of foundation upon which to build their own grain handling terminals.

"Millions and millions have and are being spent on export facilities on the West Coast. Montana wheat has a lot going for it in the importing world's eyes. Growers now have a chance to build their own terminals and handle their own grain, thereby capitalizing not only on reduced rates for unit trains, but taking control of the grain themselves and pocketing the change."

Radermacher says super-terminals may not spell disaster for towns which lean heavily on local elevators for their economic well being.

"Those small elevators can still function as collection points. Two or three can join together as a cooperative, moving grain to the bigger terminals from there."

But Radermacher says to date only a handful of the state's shippers have actively sought expert opinion on the specifics involved in erecting their own terminal.

And as the months drag on, towns like Rapelje will be officially and irrevocably shut off from rail service which, from the beginning, has been an important part of their low-key livelihood.

There is a gloomy precedent for all this. One has only to glance off one of the stretches of freeway that criss-cross Montana to see what taking little towns off the main drag has done to them.

We've all seen those sad blue exit signs that indicate a town is just off the Interstate. A town with "No services." A town with no reason to live anymore.

Burlington Northern is right. Unit trains and widespread abandonment of low traffic spur lines will make the corporation more money. And farmers may get some rate breaks for going along. The impact to small communities, as BN officials say, will be minimal.

Unless, of course, you happen to live there.

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Terry L. Shorb is the editor of **MontWyo Agri-News**, an agricultural weekly published from Billings, Mont.

Bulletin Board

DENVER TOUR

Barring cloudy skies, the Denver Solar Energy Association is sponsoring a Sept. 19 tour of Denver homes. For the $5 ticket, you'll be shown greenhouses, solariums, active space heating systems and domestic hot water heaters. Contact: DSEA, 1290 Williams, Denver 80218; (303) 321-1645.

STUDY MONEY

Want to research the production of biomass or its conversion into energy for fuel? The Bio-Energy Council through grants by the Mellon Foundation, is doling out some $430,000 in awards. Contact Paul Bente, Jr., the Bio-Energy Council, 1625 Eye St., NW, Suite 825A, Washington, D.C. 20006; (202) 833-5656.

COLORADO'S HEALTH

The Colorado Department of Health and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have agreed on nine priorities for environmental programs this coming year. They include developing a hazardous waste program, studying cumulative health impacts of oil shale development, and decreasing direct federal involvement in state environmental and agriculture agency activities. The comment deadline on a draft outline of the agreement was Aug. 31, but copies are still available for review from the Dept. of Health, 4210 E. 11th Ave., Denver 80220.

MONTANA METHANE

For the latest poop on generating methane gas from your cow herd, you may wish to attend an Oct. 9 symposium in Kalispell, Mont., sponsored by the county extension service. Registration is $40. Contact Bruce McCallum, CES, 723 5th Ave. East, Kalispell, Mont. 59901.

SIERRANS MEET

The Wyoming Sierra Club is alive and well, with a new group in Casper and their fingers in a slew of local and state issues. To discuss its affairs, state leaders are meeting Sept. 18 at the Gordon Ranch near Kaycee, and then journeying to the Little Big Horn Canyon to look at water development plans there. Contact Mark Gordon, Gordon Ranch, Kaycee, Wyo. 82639.

BLM IN IDAHO

Read all about it. The Bureau of Land Management in Idaho, that is. They've compiled some data on what they've been up to, such as returning $6.7 million to counties in lieu of taxes, paying $3.3 million to the state treasurer, issuing 68 patents for 16,148 acres to private land owners, fighting 311 fires, and managing some 4.2 million recreation visits to its public lands. Oh yes, they also managed to license last year 1,016,000 sheep, cattle, horses and other grazers. For more BLM achievements in Idaho, send for "Facts," Federal Bldg., Box 042, Boise, Idaho 83724. One of the agency's 579 permanent employees will send you a copy.

BID FOR BISON

Take 'em away, says the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Bison Range at Moiese, Mont., has too many bison on hand — 66, to be precise — and is offering them for sale by sealed, competitive bid, Sept. 8. The minimum is $350. Last year's average was $780.43. Contact the auctioneers at (406) 644-2354.

PLATINUM PARLEY

Plans for a platinum and palladium mine in southcentral Montana's Stillwater Complex will be discussed at a public meeting Sept. 15, 7 p.m., at the Beartooth Ranch near Nye, Mont. The Anaconda Company has submitted a plan to produce 1,200 tons per day, employing about 140 persons during the 10-20 year life of the mine. An environmental impact statement will be prepared and comments are being solicited. For an information packet, contact John Inman, U.S. Forest Service, Custer National Forest, Box 2556, Billings, Mont. 59103.

GLEN CANYON DATA

For the latest defense of the Bureau of Reclamation's proposed Glen Canyon Dam hydroelectric project, send for the August newsletter, Powerplant Expansion Study, Durango Projects Office, P.O. Box 640, Durango, Colo. 81301. Data is presented on Colorado River flow patterns and the marketing strategy for the newly-created power. The facts, the agency argues, debunk myths that the river will seriously fluctuate or that most of the power will go to California.

LAW OF THE LAND

For the latest legal scoop on land use laws you may want to attend a Nov. 12-13 workshop in Denver by the American Planning Association. Sessions will include local government liability, procedural due process, First Amendment and equal protection issues. Contact: John Waxman, APA, 1313 East 60th St., Chicago, Il., 60637.

SYNFUEL SITING

Got a synthetic fuel plant? For $95, McGraw-Hill publishers will give you the state-by-state lowdown on where you can put it. Financing, environmental regulations, taxes, transportation and contacts are provided, as well as a summary of the major proposed synthetic fuels plants you'd be competing with. Send $95 for "Synfuels, Plant Siting Guide," McGraw-Hill Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020.

BOTANICAL RARITIES

Energy development and its effects on rare plants in the Rocky Mountain region will take center stage at a Nov. 5 & 6 meeting in the Denver Botanical Gardens. Sponsored by the Colorado Native Plant Society, participants will grapple with lots of who, what, where and how questions. Contact the group at P.O. Box 200, Fort Collins, Colo. 80522.

STATE OF WYOMING PUBLIC NOTICE

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLIC NOTICE IS TO STATE THE STATE OF WYOMING'S INTENTION TO ISSUE WASTEWATER DISCHARGE PERMITS UNDER THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1972 (FWPCAA), P.L. 92-500 AND THE WYOMING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (35-11-101 et. seq., WYOMING STATUTES 1957, CUMULATIVE SUPPLEMENT 1973).

IT IS THE STATE OF WYOMING'S INTENTION TO ISSUE WASTEWATER DISCHARGE PERMITS TO (5) INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES, AND (4) OIL TREATER FACILITIES, TO MODIFY (1) INDUSTRIAL PERMIT, AND (2) MUNICIPAL PERMITS, AND TO RENEW (1) COMMERCIAL PERMIT.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

(1) APPLICANT NAME: Amoco Production Company — Whitney Canyon Gas Plant

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 17675
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117

FACILITY LOCATION: Uinta County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0030724

The Amoco Production Company is planning the construction of a large natural gas processing plant which will be known as the Whitney Canyon Plant located approximately fifteen miles north of the City of Evanston, Wyoming. No industrial wastewaters will be discharged from the plant, however, domestic sewage will be treated by a package plant which will discharge to Salt Creek (Class II Water) via approximately .5 mile of an unnamed drainage.

The proposed permit requires compliance with National Secondary Treatment Standards and limitations based upon Wyoming's In-stream Water Quality Standards effective immediately. Periodic monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire July 31, 1986.

(2) APPLICANT NAME: Amoco Production Company

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 17675
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117

FACILITY LOCATION: Uinta County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0030732

The Amoco Production Company is planning the construction of a natural gas processing and nitrogen plant which will be known as the Anschutz Ranch East Plant located approximately fifteen miles South of the City of Evanston, Wyoming. No industrial wastewaters will be discharged from the plant, however, domestic sewage will be treated by a package plant which will flow approximately two miles in an unnamed draw before entering Yellow Creek (Class II Waters).

The proposed permit requires compliance with National Secondary Treatment Standards and limitations based upon Wyoming's In-stream Water Quality Standards effective immediately. Periodic monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire July 31, 1986.

(3) APPLICANT NAME: Amoco Production Company

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 17675
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117

FACILITY LOCATION: Petroleum Drilling "Man Camp", Section 26 and 35, T13N, R121W, Uinta County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0030759

The Amoco Production Company is in the process of constructing a "Man Camp" adjacent to the East Anschutz Ranch Gas processing plant. The Man Camp will be large enough to house 100-200 persons. Wastewater from the Man Camp will be treated by a package plant which will discharge to Yellow Creek (Class II Water) after flowing approximately 2.2 miles in an unnamed drainage (Class IV Waters). The wastewater system for the Man Camp is completely separate from the system for the gas processing plant.

The proposed permit requires compliance with National Secondary Treatment Standards and effluent limitations based upon Wyoming's In-stream Water Quality Standards effective immediately. Periodic monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire July 31, 1986.

(4) APPLICANT NAME: Lithcote Company

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 796
Evanston, Wyoming 82930

FACILITY LOCATION: Evanston, Uinta County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0030805

The Lithcote Company operates a railroad car maintenance facility in the City of Evanston, Wyoming. Wastewaters consist of floor drains and compressor cooling water which discharges to the Bear River (Class II Water).

The proposed permit requires periodic self-monitoring of various pollutants until January 1, 1983 at which time effluent limitations which are considered by the State of Wyoming to represent "best available treatment" technology will be in force. It is expected that ultimately this discharge will be connected to the City of Evanston's Sanitary Sewage Collection System.

Self-monitoring reports must be submitted on a quarterly basis and the permit is scheduled to expire September 30, 1986.

(5) APPLICANT NAME: The Union Carbide Corporation — Rim Uranium Mine

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 5100
Gas Hills Station
Riverton, Wyoming 82501

FACILITY LOCATION: Fremont County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0030813

The Union Carbide Company plans to empty the water out of the Old Rim Uranium Mine Pit located in the Gas Hills area of Fremont County, Wyoming. Water from the pit will be routed through a radium removal treatment plant and a series of three settling ponds prior to its discharge to West Canyon Creek (Class IV Water) via an unnamed drainage.

The proposed permit requires compliance with effluent limitations which are considered by the State of Wyoming to represent "best available treatment." However, the permit also contains a "re-opener clause" which requires the permit to be modified if more stringent standards are developed at the federal level.

Effluent quality and quantity must be self-monitored on a regular basis with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire Semptember 30, 1986.

(6) APPLICANT NAME: Amoco Production Company

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 2520
Casper, Wyoming 82601

FACILITY LOCATION: Lost Soldier Unit Facility, NE¼, Section 10, T26N, R90W, Sweetwater County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0030562

(7) APPLICANT NAME: Agri —Acres, Inc.

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 1743
Billings, Montana 59103

FACILITY LOCATION: Davis Lease No.1 & No. 2, SW¼, NW¼, Section 20, T57N, R97W, Big Horn County, Wyoming

PERMIT NUMBER: Wy-0030775

Facilities are typical oil treaters located in Sweetwater and Big Horn Counties, Wyoming. The produced water is separated from the petroleum product through the use of heater treaters and skim ponds. The discharges are to Able Creek (Class IV Water) via unnamed drainage and Sage Creek (Class II Water) via various irrigation drains.

The discharges must meet Wyoming's Produced Water Criteria effective immediately. Chapter VII of the Wyoming Water Quality Rules and regulations infers that as long as the Produced Water Criteria is

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Opinion

The strategic minerals debate

Self-sufficiency is impossible

by Brad Klafehn

Last summer, the Republican Party platform stated that one of Ronald Reagan's top domestic priorities as president would be to solve America's "strategic minerals crisis." Legislation introduced by Rep. Jim Santini (D-Nev.), has focussed debated on the issue and is producing yet another major confrontation between the Administration and conservationists. The result may be a significant liberalization of the laws governing the availability of public lands for mining.

Congressmen know there's nothing that gets legislation rolling like creating a crisis atmosphere and then invoking national security. That was the tactic used successfully in 1979 to push the multi-billion dollar synfuels program through Congress. The same strategy is now being used over strategic minerals.

For the past two years, the mining industry and Congressional sympathizers have been calling attention to the fact that the U.S. imports over half of its requirements for 24 minerals vital to industrial production. The parallel with imported oil has been emphasized repeatedly.

Rep. Santini has called South Africa, source of much of our manganese, platinum, and chromium, the "Persian Gulf of Minerals," and Rep. Dan Marriott (R-Utah) has cautioned that "If we do not start now, the crisis in non-fuel minerals in the late 1980s and early 1990s will make the Arab oil embargo in 1973-74 look like a walk in the park." Industry spokesmen have gone so far as to claim that "we would have to revert 40-50 years in our standard of living and technology" if only a portion of our supply of imported minerals were interrupted. "The Western industrial world...could be brought to its knees in six months."

To counter our dependence on imported minerals, Santini and 50 cosponsors have introduced legislation designed to strengthen the domestic minerals industry. Named the National Mineral Security Act, conservation groups have already dubbed H.R. 3364 the "Mining Supremacy Act." Among other things, the bill would ease anti-trust restrictions for domestic mining investment, extend for 10 years the 1984 cut-off date for locating claims in wilderness areas, give the Secretary of Interior authority to open for development national parks, wildlife refuges and other lands now protected, and direct the Bureau of Land Management to consider mining the dominant use when writing land use plans. In the name of national security, the bill would significantly alter the ground rules which control mining on public lands.

To date, the strategic minerals debate has centered on a dozen or so resources which the U.S. imports heavily from Africa and other politically unstable areas and which are utilized largely by the aerospace and electronics industries. Minerals used to alloy steel seem to be of greatest concern. They include chromium, cobalt, manganese, nickel, and the platinum-group metals. In 1979, our dependency on imports of those minerals ranged from 98 percent for manganese to 77 percent for nickel.

MINERAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY?

Although there is little consensus about many aspects of our strategic minerals situation, authorities agree on one thing: U.S. mineral self-sufficiency is impossible. This was recognized as far back as 1925 by the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America and by the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, which concluded, "The United States will (continue to) be dependent on foreign sources for a considerable fraction" of our supply of chromite, manganese, and 20 other minerals, and the we will "in the future, as in the past, depend on other countries almost entirely" for nickel, cobalt, and platinum, among others. In 1952, the Paley Commission, created by President Truman to study mineral imports, reached the same conclusion. It found that the U.S. was self-sufficient in only two metals: molybdenum and magnesium. U.S. Bureau of Mines figures show the same is true today.

The parallel between imported oil and imported minerals breaks down even further when mining industry spokesmen themselves admit that minerals embargoes are quite unlikely. Testifying last November 27 before Santini's Subcommittee on Mines and Mining, Simon D. Strauss, a director of ASARCO and chairman of the Committee on Minerals Availability of the American Mining Congress, stated: "On the whole, the U.S. is unlikely to have serious difficulties in securing adequate supplies of the mineral materials it requires." Discounting the fear of embargoes, he said: "The cyclical nature of the demand for minerals and the possibilities of scrap recovery constitute serious barriers to any attempts to cartelize most non-fuel minerals. The exporting countries are heavily dependent on their foreign exchange earnings and would be hard pressed to emulate the oil embargo example of 1973."

The challenge for policymakers, then, is to lessen our vulnerability to a partial supply curtailment through a variety of techniques, none of which — even in combination — can hope to give us total mineral security. Among those techniques are increased domestic production, stockpiling, substitution, recycling, providing investment incentives, stepping up metallurgical research, seeking reliable alternative foreign sources and working for greater international cooperation on minerals.

LIMITED DOMESTIC RESERVES

The exclusive strategy of Santini's bill is to encourage the mining industry to develop strategic minerals on federal lands at home. The other alternatives are ignored.

A close look at geologic reports, however, reveals that this solution has very limited value in the long run. Chromium, manganese and the rest are where you find them, and in a worldwide perspective, where you find them is not on public lands in the West — at least not in quantities which would substantially lessen our import dependency. In all but a few cases they are too low in quality to warrant production.

Concerning manganese, for example, the U.S. Geological Survey has noted that America "has virtually no domes-

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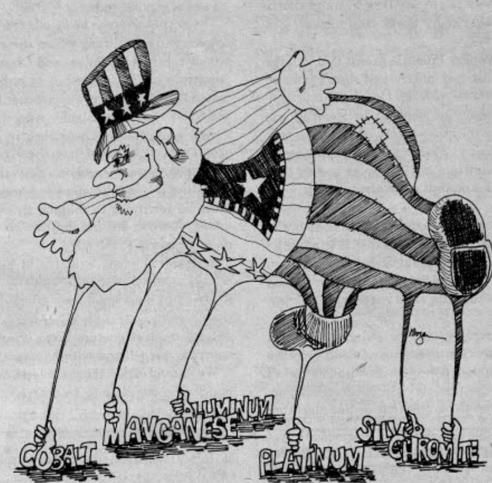
guest editorial



A critical situation

by Jim Santini

Much of my time over the past several years in Congress has been devoted to a thorough and careful investigation of the strategic and critical minerals issues facing this country. The weakened and declining position of our nation's mining industry is a problem that must be addressed in this Congress.

Our nation is richly blessed in mineral wealth. However, government controls and regulations have strangled attempts to reach out, explore and inventory our domestic resources. According to a Department of the Interior report, mining activities are either closed or restricted on 68 percent of our public lands. This is not a policy of foresight. With our eyes shut, we have, in effect, promoted a dangerous reliance on offshore mineral resources.

Two countries, the Soviet Union and South Africa, have 99 percent of the world's known reserves of platinum, required for synthetic fuel production; 85 percent of the world's manganese, essential for steel production; and, when other countries of southern Africa are included, 98 percent of the world's chromium ores. Additionally, over half of the world's production of cobalt comes from Zaire.

Preservation of our resources is important. But, we must first know what minerals are domestically available. It takes an estimated 10-20 years to start mineral production once a deposit is discovered.

I am as deeply concerned about our nation's environment as anyone. As Nevada's only congressman, I am keenly aware of the need to protect this country's environment from being destroyed or misused. One of the major reasons I have so vigorously questioned MX missile deployment in Nevada is because of my concern for the environmental damage such a massive system would cause. A balanced approach to development of our natural resources must be taken to ensure not only a protected and unspoiled environment, but also to ensure economic and national security.

On April 30, I introduced the National Minerals Security Act, H.R. 3364, as the legislative vehicle to establish a national minerals policy. In my opinion, the bill is a responsible answer to the varied issues confronting us. It is unfortunate that the environmental community has chosen to oppose my bill so vigorously, though many of these groups say publicly that they support the formulation of a national minerals policy. Many of the controversies about the bill are generated by severe misconceptions of the bill's true intent.

FOUR THEMES

NMSA is an omnibus bill containing four major themes. Let me discuss them briefly and then respond to some of the criticism the bill has received.

First, NMSA would create a White House-level Council on Minerals and Materials to advise the President on

(continued on page

Opinion

Wyo. conservatives' choice: 'Multiple use' or local voice

Wyoming has the smallest population in the lower 48 states. Because of that, when 20 people tell Republican Sen. Alan Simpson that they don't want timbering in Jack Creek, he has to listen. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) might not be so impressed if 15 people in New York City got angry about tree trimming in Central Park.

But Simpson got an earful when the small, angry Pinedale group laid into the Forest Service, and him, the other day. He listened quietly and didn't promise anything, but he did say: "When I went to Cheyenne years ago (as a state representative from 1964-78) this bunch of people came around lobbying for clean air and reclamation and that sort of thing. We thought they were pretty odd, but the next thing we were passing these laws. When I went to Washington two years ago, I thought the people of Wyoming wanted 'multiple use.' Now it seems that everything's changed, and you're asking me for protection for these places."

Welcome to political reality, senator.

Whether Simpson will change his multiple use tune remains to be seen, but at least he is thinking about it. So are other elected officials from this supposedly conservative, pro-development state. It began a few months ago when Rep. Richard Cheney (R) announced unqualified opposition to oil and gas exploration or leasing in the Washakie Wilderness. Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R), after some waffling, now agrees with Cheney.

The delegation faces a similar controversy over proposed oil and gas drilling in Cache Creek, just outside of Jackson. The Forest Service has listed drilling by the National Cooperative Refinery Association as its "preferred alternative" in an environmental impact statement and the bureaucrats say only congressional action could stop the well now. So the congressional delegation is hearing from everyone from the Chamber of Commerce to the Sierra Club with complaints about the access road up Game creek, the possibility of smelly gas leaks and the disruption of a popular recreation area.

These controversies bring out the schizophrenia of the country's current crop of "conservatives," among whom the entire Wyoming delegation is comfortably ensconced. Simpson, Wallop and Cheney are leading defenders of James Watt and "multiple use" management of public lands — a buzz phrase which means less preservation and more development. But as "Sagebrush Rebels" they are also in the front rank of legislators who want the feds to listen more sensitively to the states; and what they hear back in Wyoming is that the locals and state officials aren't getting the word in on these timbering and resource development decisions.

Simpson says it would be a new and unprecedented step if the delegation began meddling in administrative decisions like Jack Creek or Cache Creek. Certainly it must be terrifying to imagine lines of constituents outside his office asking for action on every drilling application on Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management property in the state.

Simpson is wrong, however, if he imagines congressmen never twist arms in federal agencies over such minutiae. He chairs the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and must know that every day congressmen forward special requests for their constituents to the Veterans Administration with that speical little spur, the congressman's signature. Some offices have a staffer who works almost exclusively spurring such claims with letters and calls.

We should expect the same special attention to timber sales and oil and gas rigs enacted in our state by federal agencies.

— GOG

letters

THE CHEATING OF DENIS HAYES

Dear **HCN**,

That's right, kick him when he's down. MM's editorial blast of Denis Hayes (**HCN**, 7-10-81) in the aftermath of his forced retirement from active service as the Solar Energy Research Institute's head demonstrates a keen lack of understanding of modern politics. It was the nature of his political task that Hayes had to work with, through, and around the Department of Energy nuclear boys in order to try to fulfill SERI's solar mandate. To openly, publicly criticize those officials, as Hayes did in his "dull, gray men" speech of July 24th, spells immediate (well, call it a few hours) political death.

MM accuses Hayes of "angelic silence" during his term as SERI chief. Far from it. The fact that Hayes did not publicly bemoan the ineptitude of his DOE superiors earlier was not only a sacrifice, it was politically smart — that is how he managed to stay in there the 22 months he did. I dare say the people who needed to know of his plight — congressmen supportive of solar efforts — did know. But his public silence prior to the July 24th speech did not demonstrate a desertion of the solar cause.

I appreciated Lorna Wilkes's comments (**HCN** Letters, 7-24-81) pointing out the admitted role of SERI as a scientific community, a research facility. But her letter did not go far enough in countering MM's accusations of Hayes. To say, as MM did, that Hayes was not committed to the commercialization of solar, and that he was biased toward high technology, slanders his past, assumes his corruption, and ignores his accomplishments at SERI. To mention a couple examples of programs he has backed: some 100,000 people visited a SERI sponsored solar home demonstration program last year in Denver. And 15 percent of the homes in a small Colorado county — Costilla, in the south-

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met, the water is suitable for beneficial use. There is no evidence to indicate that limitations more stringent than the Produced Water Criteria are needed to meet Wyoming's Water Quality Standards. The Department will continue to evaluate the discharges and, if necessary, will modify the permits if evidence indicates that more stringent limitations are needed.

Semi-annual self-monitoring is required for all parameters with the exception of oil and grease, which must be monitored quarterly. The proposed expiration date for the permits is December 31, 1982 for the Amoco facility and December 31, 1983 for the Agri Acres facility.

(8) APPLICANT NAME:	Amoco Production Company
MAILING ADDRESS:	P.O. Box 569 Powell, Wyoming 82435
FACILITY LOCATION:	Little Buffalo Basin Field, Tensleep Battery No. 3, NW¼, Section 1, T47N, R100W, Park County, Wyoming
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0030791

Facility is a typical oil treater located in Park County, Wyoming. The produced water is separated from the petroleum product through the use of heater treaters and skim ponds. The discharge is to Little Buffalo Creek (Class IV Water).

The discharge must meet Wyoming's Produced Water Criteria effective immediately. Chapter VII of the Wyoming Water Quality Rules and Regulations infers that as long as the Produced Water Criteria is met, the water is suitable for beneficial use. There is no evidence to indicate that limitations more stringent than the Produced Water Criteria are needed to meet Wyoming's Water Quality Standards. The Department will continue to evaluate the discharge and, if necessary, will modify the permit if evidence indicates that more stringent limitations are needed.

Semi-annual self-monitoring is required for all parameters with the exception of oil and grease, which must be monitored quarterly. The proposed expiration date for the permit is December 31, 1986.

(9) APPLICANT NAME:	William C. Kirkwood
MAILING ADDRESS:	P.O. Drawer 3439 Casper, Wyoming 82602
FACILITY LOCATION:	Burnt Hollow-Tex Oil Lease, SW¼, SE¼, Section 35, T55N, R64W, Crook County, Wyoming
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0030741

William Kirkwood intends to institute a tertiary oil recovery system at the Burnt Hollow-Tex Oil Lease in Crook County, Wyoming. In the process, produced water and a small amount of caustic material will be heated to steam and injected into the oil bearing formation to facilitate oil recovery. Excess produced water and water softener brines will be discharged to Davis Canyon Creek (Class IV Water). This wastewater will be treated prior to discharge with standard oil field water treatment units.

The proposed permit requires compliance with Wyoming's effluent limitations for produced water discharges. When the total dissolved solids concentration of such discharges is less than 5,000 mg/l, they are assumed to be beneficially used by stock and wildlife.

The proposed permit requires periodic monitoring of effluent quality and quantity with reporting of results semi-annually. The permit is scheduled to expire December 31, 1984.

(10) APPLICANT NAME:	Sheridan Enterprises, Inc.
MAILING ADDRESS:	P.O. Box 6025 Sheridan, Wyoming 82801
FACILITY LOCATION:	Northeast of the Town of Acme, Sheridan County, Wyoming
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0027863

Sheridan Enterprises Inc. has proposed opening a new open-pit coal mine in northern Sheridan County which will be known as the Welch I - North Mine.

The discharge would flow into the Tongue River (Class II Water).

The discharge must meet effluent limitations which are considered by the State of Wyoming to represent "best available treatment." However, the permit also contains a "re-opener clause" which requires the permit to be modified should more stringent limitations be developed at the federal level.

Runoff from disturbed areas will be controlled by sedimentation ponsd which are designed to completely contain the runoff resulting from a ten year - 24 hour precipitation event. Because these ponds will not normally discharge, they are not specifically identified in the permit but are covered by operation and maintenance provisions.

Periodic self-monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required with reporting of results monthly. The permit is scheduled to expire August 31, 1986.

(11) APPLICANT NAME:	The Town of Byron, Wyoming - Wastewater
MAILING ADDRESS:	P.O. Box 126 Byron, Wyoming 82412
FACILITY LOCATION:	Big Horn County, Wyoming
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0020281

The wastewater treatment facilities serving the Town of Byron, Wyoming, consist of a 3 cell non-aerated lagoon system. The last cell discharges to the Shoshone River (Class II Water) via a slough.

The existing permit for this facility requires only that the existing facilities be operated at maximum

letters

ern San Luis Valley — have, with the help of SERI, begun to utilize solar in one or another way. Hayes was outraged at the June 19th announcement of budget and staff slashings which would affect such popular commercialization efforts.

Let us not "succumb to idealizing the past," says MM. Indeed, nor let us slander it. Denis Hayes spent a good number of his allotted three billion heartbeats trying to work around the dull gray nuclear boys at DOE. Just because Reagan's friendly oral surgeon, alias DOE head James Edwards, exceeded the elastic limit of Hayes's patience does not mean that he needs to be doubly cheated by a desertion of his environmental supporters. If MM still needs someone to kick, I suggest finding a dull, gray sort. Better yet, since kicking people is more than anything a journalistic ploy, tell us about some of the SERI reports DOE suppressed earlier this year. And why. I think the reality of modern politics will become clear very quickly.

Bob Anderson
Golden, Colo.

RECOGNIZE GROWTH LIMITS

Dear **HCN**,

Out of all the issues I have addressed in the past 10 years as an activist in the movement to stabilize U.S. population size, the immigration issue is the most difficult. Problems for both the immigrant, especially the illegal immigrant, and for our country are enormous. Issues of politics, law, economics, social equity and human rights all enter the picture.

But one fact should be obvious. Probably half the world's population of 4.5 billion could be classified as potential economic or politicial refugees, and there's simply no way the U.S. could play host to even the smallest fraction of this number.

One of the directions from Congress to the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy, to which you referred (**HCN**, 7-24-81), was to study the effect of immigration on demographic trends, and to recommend suitable numerical limits on immigration. How can this be done if not within the context of a national population policy that recognizes limits to growth? Rep. Richard Ottinger (D-N.Y.) introduced such a policy in the House this January. The U.S. needs just and humane immigration laws and refugee policies that reflect a long overdue population policy calling for stabilization at the earliest date.

Karil Frohboese, President
Zero Population Growth
Salt Lake City Chapter

Santini...

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policy decisions affecting the minerals industry. This three-member panel would also coordinate and review all government activities related to domestic production of minerals.

Second, the bill would establish procedures to assist the Secretary of the Interior in determining those public lands which have the highest interest and potential for domestic production. Contrary to what some critics say, this provision does not automatically open all public lands for mining activity. It merely provides the Secretary with the means for determining what lands, if any, should be made available. The Secretary would request nomination of areas for development and then follow standard procedures for determining if those lands should indeed be opened. The Secretary would also be required to review all public land withdrawals and classifications and report back to Congress on the number of acres closed or restricted to mineral activity.

The third major provision would amend U.S. tax laws to assist the mining industry in making the capital investments necessary to find, develop and produce the minerals on which our economy and national security depend. This provision would also provide tax-exempt financing for pollution control facilities as well as allow for accelerated amortization of pollution control and other government-mandated expenditures.

Finally, my bill would amend the Strategic and Critical Materials Stockpiling Act to mandate that monies generated by the sale of surplus materials be used for the purchase of other minerals and materials for which we are significantly below our national stockpile goal. Currently, these funds have been used for other expenditures, thus requiring the re-authorization of new funds to purchase badly needed minerals and materials for the stockpile.

Many people have been led to believe that enactment of my bill would result in the mining and eventual destruction of the scenic beauty of our national parks. This is totally inaccurate. There are currently four laws which forbid mining activity in the national parks.

As well, each statute creating an individual park contains language preventing mining activity. I do not, and would not, seek any change in these provisions.

WILDERNESS MINING

Another commonly expressed concern is that my bill would allow mining in wilderness areas. The bill proposes nothing new in this regard except to extend the current deadline for ten years. Mineral development is currently allowed until 1984 under the Wilderness Act of 1964. However, we do not know what minerals, if any, are located in many existing wilderness areas. The ten-year extension that I propose is simply to ensure that we do not lock up forever a potentially valuable mineral resource without knowing it even exists. Mining is allowed in wilderness areas only if the wilderness characteristics can be restored after the development is complete. I do not propose to change this important stipulation.

The term "dominant use" has been widely misinterpreted and misrepresented by those who oppose my bill. The purpose of this phrase is to give mineral development on public lands **equal status** with other important uses. Over the last several years at least 12 laws have been enacted which have had a negative impact on domestic mineral development and, as stated previously, mining is restricted or precluded on over two-thirds of all Federally owned lands. It is my intent that enactment of NMSA would give mineral dvelopment equal status with other land uses, making it **a** dominant use, not **the** dominant use.

Working together, we can establish a workable national minerals policy to ensure balanced development of our national resources. Unfortunately, we cannot wait until a crisis is upon us before establishing a national minerals policy. We simply cannot run the same course with minerals in the 1980s that we traveled with energy needs, particularly oil imports, in the 1970s.

History, must not be allowed to repeat itself.

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Rep. Jim Santini is a four-term Democratic congressman from Nevada. He is chairman of the House subcommittee on mines and mining.

efficiency, however, the Town has been offered Federal construction grant funds which means the wastewater treatment facilities must be upgraded to meet Federal effluent standards and Wyoming's In-stream Water Quality Standards. The proposed permit includes limitations on BOD5, Total Suspended, Fecal Coliform Bacteria, pH and Total Residual Chlorine.

Self-monitoring requirements in the proposed permit require the monitoring of all limited parameters on a routine basis with reporting of results quarterly. The proposed permit is scheduled to expire on July 31, 1986.

The Town of Byron has been exempted from meeting Federal effluent requirements by July 1, 1977 since, in accordance with Federal requirements, it specifically requested an extension due to the previous unavailability of Federal construction grant funds. In addition, the Town has requested and received less stringent effluent limitations for the parameter Total Suspended Solids as authorized by Federal regulations for stabilization pond systems with a design flow of less than 2.0 MGD.

(12) APPLICANT NAME:	The City of Lander - Wastewater
MAILING ADDRESS:	183 S. 4th. Street Lander, Wyoming 82520
FACILITY LOCATION:	Fremont County, Wyoming
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0020389

The existing wastewater treatment facilities serving the City of Lander consist of a two cell, non-aerated, stabilization pond system. The effluent from the second cell enters Baldwin Creek (Class II Water).

The City has been offered and has accepted Federal construction grant funds for a new treatment system. Plans call for an aerated lagoon system which would discharge to the Middle Fork of the Popo Agie River (Class II Water).

The proposed permit requires that the current system be operated at maximum capability and efficiency until June 1, 1983 at which time the new facilities must be in operation. In addition, the proposed permit requires compliance with ammonia limitations if funding for advanced wastewater treatment is provided at the Federal level.

At this time it appears that violation of Wyoming's In-stream Standards for dissolved oxygen will not occur provided National Secondary Treatment Standards are achieved. However, this position will continue to be evaluated (and the permit modified if necessary) as more information becomes available.

Self-monitoring requirements in the proposed permit require the monitoring of all limited parameters on a routine basis with reporting of results monthly. The proposed permit is scheduled to expire on September 30, 1986.

The City of Lander has been exempted from meeting Federal effluent requirements by July 1, 1977 since, in accordance with Federal requirements, it specifically requested an extension due to the previous unavailability of Federal construction grant funds. In addition, the city has requested and received less stringent effluent limitations for the parameter Total Suspended Solids as authorized by Federal regulations for stabilization pond systems with a design flow of less than 2.0 MGD.

(13) APPLICANT NAME:	Mr. Pat Self
MAILING ADDRESS:	Old Corral Motor Hotel P.O. Box 217 Centennial, Wyoming 82055
FACILITY LOCATION:	Albany County, Wyoming
PERMIT NUMBER:	Wy-0026361

The Old Corral consists of a restaurant, bar, 16 motel units, and one single family residence and is located in Centennial, Wyoming. Wastewater from the facility is treated by a package plant which discharges to the North Fork of the Little Laramie River (Class II Water) after flowing in an unnamed drainage (Class IV Water) for approximately 1.5 miles.

The proposed permit requires compliance with National Secondary Treatment Standards and effluent limitations based on Wyoming's In-stream Water Quality Standards. Periodic self-monitoring of effluent quality and quantity is required with reporting of results quarterly. The permit is scheduled to expire October 31, 1986.

STATE-EPA TENTATIVE DETERMINATIONS

Tentative determinations have been made by the State of Wyoming in cooperation with the EPA staff relative to effluent limitations and conditions to be imposed on the permits. These limitations and conditions will assure that State water quality standards and applicable provisions of the FWPCAA will be protected.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments are invited any time prior to Ocotober 5, 1981. Comments may be directed to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Division, Permits Section, Hathaway Building, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002, or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII, Enforcement Division, Permits Administration and Compliance Branch, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80295. All comments received prior to October 5, 1981 will be considered in the formulation of final determinations to be imposed on the permits.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information may be obtained upon request by calling the State of Wyoming, (307) 777-7781, or EPA, (303) 327-3874, or by writing to the aforementioned addresses.

The complete applications, draft permits and related documents are available for review and reproduction at the aforementioned addresses.

Public Notice No: Wy-81-010

Opinion

Klafehn...

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tic reserves and its known resources are both very low grade and refractory to economic concentration." We do have large nickel resources but they too are quite low in grade. Canada's nickel deposits, our largest source of supply, are seven times as rich. Cobalt is also found domestically, but again, the ore is usually too low-grade to warrant development.

Finally, in 1973 the USGS estimated that our domestic chromium resources would yield only a four-to five-year supply and that our identified resources of platinum amounted to less than one percent of the world's total.

Given these geologic facts, one may question the wisdom of relying entirely on encouraging domestic production to ease disruptions. Yet accessibility to public lands minerals has been targeted as the primary problem, even though Congress seems to have gone out of its way to allow development of strategic minerals in those few areas where they have been found in the West.

For example, the Stillwater Complex, in the northern slope of Montana's Beartooth Mountains, has been known for decades to contain perhaps the largest deposit of chromium and platinum in the United States. A well-defined, heavily-mineralized zone extends for 27 miles along the mountain-front.

Even though previous Stillwater mineral operations, which closed down in 1961, were inactive when the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness was created, the area was specifically left out because of its mineralization. In recent years, the skyrocketting price of the platium group metals has made development of the Stillwater Complex increasingly attractive.

According to Sherman Sollid, a Gallatin National Forest geologist in Bozeman, both Anaconda and Stillwater PGM Resources, a joint venture of Johns-Manville and Chevron, are seriously proposing to open mines on the deposit. They are applying to state and federal agencies for permits, and the environmental impact statement process is underway.

Sollid says that the main problem now with minerals availability and access is the rugged terrain of canyons and the steep dip of the deposit. Santini's bill would not facilitate mining this area.

Likewise, lack of access to federal minerals is not preventing Noranda Mines from opening a cobalt mine in the Black Bird District of Idaho. Not only was this area omitted from the River of No Return Wilderness, but a 39,000-acre block adjacent to it was given special status in July 1980 as the Clear Creek Special Mining Management Zone. Although the cobalt potential of that area is purely speculative, Congress included it in the wilderness area but with the proviso that its dominant use was to be exploration for and development of cobalt, if present. Here again, it seems that minerals availability has been facilitated, not restricted.

Perhaps the greatest cry of mineral land inaccessibility has been raised over Alaska. There are currently no metal mines operating in the state, largely because geologic knowledge is inadequate and because there is little infrastructure to support processing and transporting the ore.

According to Peter Scholes of the Sierra Club, the Alaska lands legislation, which created over 100 million acres of parks, wilderness and refuges, affected only seven or eight identified mineral prospects, and the legislation was specifically drawn to permit development of all but one of them — a nickel deposit buried beneath a glacier in Glacier Bay National Park. Three copper prospects near the Gates of the Arctic Wildlife Refuge were specifically excluded from the Refuge, said Scholes, and special provision was made for a transportation corridor through the Refuge to connect the prospects with the road servicing the Alyeska oil pipeline. In addition, a nickel find was deleted from the West Chichagof wilderness proposal because of its mineralization.

These facts all raise questions about the supposition that mineral accessibility is the main problem which needs to be solved. But even if increased domestic production is not the answer to our imports problem, it may well behoove Congress to take other steps to lessen our vulnerability to supply disruptions.

STRATEGIC STOCKPILES

Much of the industry testimony before Congress in 1979 and 1980 mentioned the inadequacy of our domestic stockpiles of strategic materials. It is widely agreed that stockpiling can be a very effective means of cushioning supply interruptions. The U.S. has had a stockpiling program since 1939, but the quantities of minerals in the stockpile have varied greatly over the years in response to policy changes and to politically-oriented sales of materials. Presidentially-ordered sales from the stockpile have often been used to generate money which Congress might not otherwise appropriate.

Then on July 30, 1979, Jimmy Carter signed into law the Strategic and Critical Materials Stockpile Revisions Act. The act requires the President to maintain a stockpile of militarily essential raw materials sufficient for a war or other national emergency lasting up to three years. It also established a mechanism to prevent political manipulation of the stockpiles — a revolving fund in which money from sales of excess materials is used to buy minerals not meeting the stockpile goal. In 1979, 53 minerals were below the stockpile target; 40 exceeded it. The stockpile was then worth $9.1 billion.

The passage of the act was hailed as a major step forward in reducing our minerals vulnerability. A firm goal was set legislatively and the means established to achieve it. Of the Western nations, until recently the United States has been the only one with any stockpiling program whatsoever. France and Germany are now initiating them, but our ambitious program makes us considerably more secure than our allies.

Another means of coping with supply shortfalls is substitution of materials. Stockpiles are primarily effective in the short-term; substitution would ease shortages over the medium and long terms.

Of the five alloys considered above, only manganese lacks satisfactory substitutes. Thirty-seven percent of the platinum used in the U.S. goes to the manufacturing of automobile pollution control devices. According to the Congressional Research Service, however, alternative technologies for controlling emissions, such as the stratified charge ignition system, exist today and could eliminate that use entirely. In addition, at least 28 percent of the world's use of platinum is for non-essentials, such as jewelry.

And when he was chief operating officer of United Technologies Corp., General Alexander Haig told Congress that work in his company's Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Division to replace cobalt alloys "will reduce the need for cobalt by 30 to 35 percent" starting in 1981. Haig went on to state, "Through stepped up conservation and recycling, we are reducing our raw materials requirements considerably."

In Worldwatch Paper No. 23, Denis Hayes summed up the situation: "...at least two-thirds of the material resources that we now waste could be reused without important changes in life styles." Seventy percent of all metals, he said, are used once and then discarded.

Despite our overall lack of high-quality domestic reserves, large stockpiles, and enormous possibilities for substitution and recycling, a group of Western Congressmen continue to press for "supply side" answers to the mineral import problem, while raising the specter of devastating economic disruptions.

It appears that the United States is more vulnerable to supply interruptions than we need to be, but while there is cause for concern, there is no need for panic.

Any subject as complex and as vital to the United States as minerals policy deserves careful attention by legislators and the general public. Hopefully, the subject will receive thoughtful consideration in the next few months and Congress will not be automatically swayed by the cries of industry alarmists.

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Brad Klafehn, former director of the Colorado Open Space Council's Mining Workshop, is currently a freelance writer in Crawford, Colo.