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Opening Remarks

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Recommended Citation

Bisplinghoff, Raymond L., "Opening Remarks" (1975). *UMR-MEC Conference on Energy*. 54.
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OPENING REMARKS

by

R.L. Bisplinghoff

UMR-MEC CONFERENCE ON ENERGY

October 7, 1975

You are all extended the very warmest welcome to the University of Missouri-Rolla. This four day conference on energy, the second of its kind, is filled with papers and activities that should find some interest for almost everyone involved in energy activities. All of us on this campus want you to have a rewarding four days and to enjoy yourselves as well. It goes without saying that we stand ready to aid you in every way that is possible. I want to commend the organizers, particularly Dr. Derald Morgan, for his hard and dedicated work in putting the conference together.

Energy and non-renewable natural resources in general will be the name of the game from now on the the United States. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, industrial and economic growth in the United States has been coupled to growth in available energy. The two are inextricably connected. The state of Missouri and the nation will not solve their economic problems until they solve their energy problems. The most serious aspect of the energy problem now is capital formation. Capital investments now being made by business, state and local governments are not large enough to scratch the surface. Some measure of energy independence by 1985 will require at least a 600 billion dollar capital investment. The United States is clearly in a period of uncertainty and confusion with respect to the solution of its energy dilemma. Few people recognize the

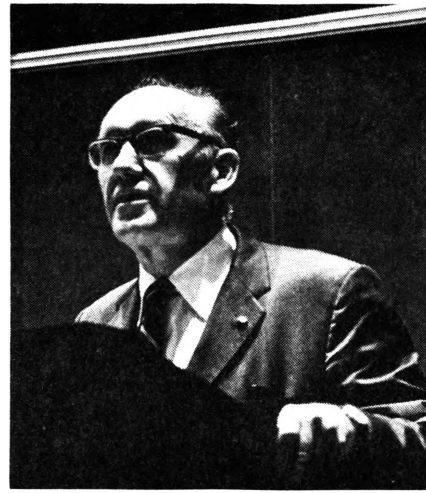
gravity of the situation and fewer still are doing anything useful about it. During the ten minutes required to make these remarks we will have shipped a half-million dollars out of the country to pay for imported hydrocarbons. It is not necessary to be an economic genius to recognize that we will soon bleed to death.

But, the real paradox of our energy crisis is that the United States has enormous untapped energy resources and human resources with technical know-how. What it lacks are decisions, goals, and leadership. The response of our political system to the energy dilemma has so far been disgraceful.

It is not true that we are running out of resources that can be easily and cheaply exploited without regard for future operations. It is not true that we must turn our back on economic growth. It is true that the rising cost of extracting and conserving nature's resources slows economic growth. What is true is that we have reached a watershed in our methods of management and exploitation of resources. We must face the fact that the well of non-renewable natural resources is not bottomless. We must conserve petroleum and find substitutes for it in natural gas from coal, nuclear energy and sunlight. We must accelerate programs to develop synthetic and other substitute materials in addition to creating a recycle society which reuses many materials indefinitely.

Like so many emerging national problems, the federal energy problem cannot be solved piecemeal. Federal planning policy and leadership will be required as, never before, in energy as in non-renewable raw materials. One must have the faith that trivia will not continue to triumph in Washington and that we will one day obtain a national energy policy.

Again, I wish you the very best during the course of your visit to Rolla.



Dr. Raymond L. Bisplinghoff, Chancellor of the University of Missouri-Rolla, presenting his "Opening Remarks"