

Congressman

NICK RAHALL'S

WEEK IN REVIEW

WEEK ENDING: JUNE 20, 1980

WASHINGTON D.C.

BLACK LUNG FUNDS APPROVED:

ON THURSDAY, JUNE 19, THE HOUSE APPROVED A \$16 BILLION SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL THAT PROVIDED \$343 MILLION FOR THE BLACK LUNG DISABILITY TRUST FUND. DUE TO THE INCREASED NUMBER OF BLACK LUNG CLAIMS BEING PROCESSED AND APPROVED THIS YEAR, THIS MEASURE WAS NECESSARY SO THAT BENEFITS COULD BE PAID.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SECURITY:

IT WAS ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK, THAT THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND MAY BE RUNNING LOW ON MONEY. AT THE PRESENT RATE OF INFLATION AND WITH AN INCREASED NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES, OVER 35 MILLION AMERICANS, THE TRUST FUND COULD BE DEPLETED BY LATE 1981 OR EARLY 1982.

CONGRESS IS ALREADY LOOKING INTO WAYS TO SOLIDIFY THE PROGRAM. ONE PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE LOANS BEING MADE TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY FUND FROM THE MONEY THAT PRESENTLY PAYS MEDICARE HOSPITAL BENEFITS. MEDICARE WOULD NOT BE PUT IN JEOPARDY BY THIS ACTION, AND BOTH SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE COULD OPERATE FULLY UNTIL A LONG-TERM WAS FORMED. ALSO, TAXES WOULD NOT HAVE BE RAISED BY THIS PROPOSAL.

WHY NOT COAL?

CONGRESSMAN RAHALL MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON THE FLOOR OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ON THURSDAY, JUNE 19:

• Mr. RAHALL Mr. Speaker, on numerous occasions I have addressed this body on the importance of moving coal to the forefront of our Nation's energy picture. I have stated that the American people are fed up with rising energy prices resulting from the constant increases in OPEC oil.

This week, Mr. Speaker, I have received a substantial number of letters which read as follows:

I have had it with OPEC oil. I have had it with OPEC blackmail. I have had it with prices skyrocketing because of OPEC.

We have lots of coal miners hungry for work. We have giant industries hungry for energy. And the eastern United States has lots of coal, just sitting there waiting to be mined and used.

Any nation that can put men on the moon, transplant hearts, and walk on the ocean floor seven miles down can certainly develop ways to make coal burn cleanly and safely for the environment. But Congress has failed to put together a viable energy program for over 5 years. And now it is long overdue.

I suggest the following steps:

1. Convert our industries and utilities from oil to coal as fast as possible. This must be an urgent program.

2. Develop coal gasification-liquefaction. Right now, there are plants in operation in other countries. A highly successful process to convert coal to gas has been in operation for 25 years. The fact that a United States corporation was a designer and builder of these plants makes it clear we could do this too.

3. Continue and accelerate energy conservation programs throughout the United States for everyone.

Without coal, this nation's industry could never have been developed. Now, coal power can save us. We've got to break the blackmail of OPEC oil. Stand up for coal. Make coal a top national energy priority.

Mr. Speaker, it is up to us, as the Federal elected body closest to the people, to halt this OPEC blackmail. It is up to us to move quickly on the coal conversion plan that is presently in the Energy and Power Subcommittee chaired by Mr. DINGELL. It is up to us to approve the conference report on the Energy Security Act, a measure that provides: \$20 billion for the development of a synthetic fuels program, synfuels made from coal and other natural resources; \$3 billion for solar energy research; and new initiatives for conservation, among many other provisions.

Also, I believe we should give our support to President Carter as he leaves for the economic summit, because one of the objectives of the President's trip is to reach agreement on a long-range energy plan with our allies, based significantly on America's vast coal resources and potential for developing synfuels.

World coal reserves already discovered constitute five times currently proven world oil reserves. Under projected rates of increase in coal use, which would mean a tripling of coal production by the end of the century, only 15 percent of coal reserves would be used up by the year 2000. And new coal reserves are being discovered daily.

Mr. Speaker, we have the answers for those Americans who are asking the question, why not coal? We must now move forward to formulate our answers into real policy. •