

FOREWORD

The Tenth Oil Shale Symposium was held 13 years after the first of this series, and, at first glance, commercial production of oil from shale appears to be no closer to reality than it did in 1964. Even though the energy crisis is still with us--and during one month this year for the first time liquid petroleum imports comprised more than half of the total liquid fuels consumed by the United States--commercialization of shale oil is still an elusive goal. However, a deeper look shows that much has been accomplished.

Many man-years of work and many millions of dollars have been invested during this period to learn more about the processes and to minimize risks by obtaining data adequate for economic evaluation and design purposes. Many of the topics now under study were unimportant 13 years ago, especially in the areas of toxic substances, environmental pollution, and social planning. While in situ retorting was considered impractical then, today the trend is toward more emphasis on in situ operations to minimize solid materials handling problems and costs, and to reduce environmental and health effects to reasonable levels.

These trends are reflected in the topics covered by the speakers at the 1977 symposium and the range of interests of the attendees. As always, the success of the symposium is due to the authors and their employees who make the results of the work available by participating in the program. In addition, I am indebted to the session chairmen, and to John R. Reubens and Jon W. Raese who reviewed and prepared the papers for publication.