

FOREWORD

In the foreword of the 15th Oil Shale Symposium Proceedings, it was stated that "barring more unusual and unforeseen circumstances, 1983 will mark the beginning of a sustained commercial industry even though it will be a much slower start than hoped." At the time of the 16th Oil Shale Symposium (April 1983), the crude oil market was soft, crude prices were down, and the refineries were operating at less than 70 percent of capacity. Predictions for future demand of petroleum indicated there would be little improvement in demand before the end of the 1980's and, barring political impacts, there would be no shortage of crude in the near future. The one bright spot in the oil shale picture was the progress in the construction of Union Oil Company of California's 10,000 BPD plant at Parachute. It was predicted the plant would start up on schedule (late summer 1983) and be completed on budget (\$660,000,000). The success of the operation of this plant will have a major impact on the future of a commercial shale oil industry and we will be following its performance with interest.

The number of informative papers submitted for presentation at the 16th Oil Shale Symposium was much greater than ever before and, as a result, the number of papers presented reached a new peak. With the help of Dick Poulson, Jack Dyni, and Tom Beard, several sessions were added and 58 papers were accepted.

It was encouraging that, in spite of the economic climate, attendance at the 16th Oil Shale Symposium was average for a symposium and strong interest continues. Over the 20 years of the symposia, we have seen many fluctuations in oil shale activity and, if past trends prevail, interest in shale oil will be down for a while but there will be an upturn. The encouraging indicators with respect to the economy as a whole are reasons to be optimistic for the future health of shale oil. However, the next few years will be of critical importance to the orderly development of a viable shale oil industry.

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