PREFACE

URANIUM RESOURCES

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The question of uranium supply is one of the major current issues facing the nuclear industry. Recently, a great deal of controversy has been raised about the anticipated adequacy of current known and projected uranium reserves to meet expected demands between 1980 and 1995.

The Nuclear Fuel Cycle Division of the American Nuclear Society sponsored a special session on Uranium Resources at the June 1975 meeting in New Orleans. The papers presented at that session are being published.

The papers have been written by people who are intimately involved in various phases of the nuclear fuel cycle. They represent producers, users, consultants, and government agencies. Looking at the question of uranium resources from several different viewpoints, they offer us a valuable cross section of current expert assessments of the situation. This collection of papers presents an overview of this rather complex problem, and discusses in detail many of the interrelated aspects of the problem.

The overall tone of the authors is guardedly optimistic. The uncertainty surrounding the adequacy of uranium resources is enhanced by uncertainties in the projected growth of nuclear generating capacity, the timing and extent of uranium and plutonium recycle, and the timing of fast-breeder commercialization. These unknown quantities contribute to the difficulty of predicting uranium needs for the future.

There seems to be unanimous agreement that the situation is somewhat urgent and that it calls for rapid expansion of current uranium-producing capacity. Accelerated exploration is necessary so that resource availability can be defined better. Expanded mining and milling capacity needs to be constructed to meet the rapidly growing demand. This expansion calls for large investments of capital and large commitments of manpower.

The consensus is that if the industry as a whole can cooperate and mobilize itself without delay, adequate uranium resources can be made available in a timely manner to meet the needs of the industry.