

Speaker defends nuclear energy

By Bill Graf

To maintain a healthy rate of national growth, energy consumption will have to grow at least 50 percent as fast as the gross nation product, said John O'Leary, former deputy secretary of the Department of Energy.

As part of the David Lectures, O'Leary spoke at the Nebraska Union Tuesday morning.

O'Leary said because of the rejection of nuclear energy and the growing rejection of coal production, the country will have trouble meeting the needs of the future.

Having once served as director of licensing for the Atomic Energy Commission, O'Leary said he sees "nuclear energy biting the dust" because people fear the large utilities, and high technology they don't understand.

He added, "I can't think of a rational reason why nuclear energy is being abandoned. Coal is one or two degrees more hazardous than nuclear. We have killed between 6,000 and 60,000 people in the process of coal burning, whereas two or three people have died in the mining of uranium."

In response to those who believe that society is undeniably complex and that we should return to "a more simple order of mankind," he cited civilizations that existed before the days of large consumption of borrowed energy. The income level per capita then was equivalent to about \$200 annually, he said.

"A return to the simple life would bring about grinding poverty."

O'Leary said he left the Energy Department because, "for two years I felt like I was butting my hand against a wall."

To questions about whether or not the oil companies are artificially creating shortages in order to raise prices, he stated that while he was with the Department of Energy they uncovered evidence of over-charges totalling \$5 million in the last five months. He expected evidence would show the over-charges to total more than \$10 million within four or five months.

However, he added, "The oil companies are no better or no worse than the rest of us. They're being watched under a microscope, so there isn't much they can get away with."

About the economic woes of the U.S., O'Leary said the price of oil has risen from the early 1973 price of \$2 a barrel to the current price of \$25 a barrel with an estimate for 1985 of \$40 a barrel. The best economic management in the U.S. could not bring the overall inflation rate to less than 7 percent annually, he said.

O'Leary, who has spent the last 27 years involved in energy production, said, "I don't like what I've learned. The bottom line is, that (because of the nations energy problems) the real GNP will cease to expand or will decrease."

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calendar

12-1:30 p.m.—Chicago Graduate Student Association, The Cellar, South
12:30-1:30 p.m.—Student "Women Speak", Room 232

2-5 p.m.—Affirmative Action Office, Room 216
3-4:30 p.m.—Campus Crusade for Christ, Room 122

3:30-5:30 p.m.—College Career Christian Fellowship, Plaza. In case of inclement weather, South Crib

5:30-7:15 p.m.—Gamma Lambda Pledges, Harvest Room A-E

5:30-7 p.m.—Engineering Toastmaster, Harvest Room C

6 p.m.—Gamma Lambda, Harvest Room

6-7 p.m.—ASUN Academic Policy Committee, Room 216

6 p.m.—Multi Cultural Affairs Tutoring, Room 225 N-R

6:30 p.m.—Football Doubles Tournament, Rec Room

7 p.m.—ASUN Senate, Regency Suite

7-9 p.m.—Finance Club, Room 232

7-9 p.m.—Bahai Association, Room 401

7-9 p.m.—ASUN Government Liaison Committee, Room 402

7 p.m.—Interfraternity Council, Ballroom

7:30 p.m.—Math Counselors, Room 225 B-C Registration Packets, North Cashier Area.

VALENTINE'S

Vol. 1 No. 2

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