P.S. to the NEWS
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RELEASE: February 5

THE SOVIET GAS DEAL

Natural gas is the cheapest and cleanest of our energy sources. Although gas is in short supply on our East and West coasts, our Government's policies toward solving this shortage, in the words of Alice in Wonderland, grow "curiouser and curiouser."

The Federal Government has forbidden the drilling of gas or oil wells on the continental shelf off our East and West coasts, although our reserves there are estimated to be tremendous and to surpass the untapped gas reserves in our Gulf of Mexico waters. The underwater terrain off the coast of New Jersey looks like the oil-rich north slope of Alaska. The geographical features beneath the sea off South Carolina look just like those in the vicinity of oil-blessed Saudi Arabia.

Instead, the Federal Government has encouraged Occidental Petroleum to make a $10 billion deal with the Soviet Union to bring gas 2,000 miles from Siberia to Vladivostok, and then across the Pacific Ocean. Another group of American corporations has been encouraged to make a $6.3 billion deal to bring gas from western Siberia across the Atlantic.

The gas could not arrive here until 1980. But the American taxpayers would start paying for it now with a $49.5 million grant from the Export-Import Bank. The gas from Siberia would cost about six times our present gas prices and would, in the words of one Congressman, "make last year's fleecing in the Russian wheat deal look like a Sunday school picnic." Some Congressmen charge that the Export-

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Import Bank is trying to make the Soviet loan despite the new Congressional law which will prohibit credits to the Soviet Union unless Russian citizens are allowed to heave the country.

It is also curious that, after telling us that America should not be dependent on Arabian oil, our Government seeks to make us dependent on Siberian gas. The Siberian gas deals would be a blunder even if they were made with a country such as Finland or Switzerland which has a good reputation for keeping its agreements. But, as the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee pointed out, the Soviet Union is the worst treaty-breaker in all history. It believes and practices what its founder Lenin taught that: "Promises are like piecrusts, made to be broken."

The great United States certainly does not have to go to Siberia for gas. In addition to the untapped gas on our continental shelf, we have the world's largest supply of coal available for gasification. Combustion Engineering announced last month that "commercial plants for coal gasification could be a reality by 1977 or 1978." Now that the price of oil has reached $8 a barrel, clean fuel can be made from coal at competitive prices.

By developing the new American sources of gas and oil, we can eliminate the dollar drain, safe taxes, and create new jobs at home.

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