the stack gases of industrial and power plants. Thus industry is presented with a choice of pursuing stack gas technology on its own—an unlikely prospect, given current problems with the technology—or of banking on the success of "clean coal" technologies. The net effect may be a powerful inducement to accelerate coal mining in the vast and largely untouched deposits of the central plains and the Rocky Mountain states.

The rationale for accelerated coal production is not purely technological, however. In an energy message planned for later this winter, the President is expected to characterize increased coal production as a boon for national security and the U.S. balance of payments, to the extent that clean coal can reduce U.S. reliance on foreign petroleum and natural gas of low sulfur content.

Other, alternative sources of energy also receive new support in the 1974 budget. Money for solar energy and geothermal R & D would double to $16 million, and the Atomic Energy Commission is to receive $323 million for its work on the breeder, raising the government's contribution by 20 percent. Nonmilitary R & D on controlled fusion would increase $7 million to a 1974 total of $44 million. The Administration also lumps the millions it is spending on laser-triggered fusion weapons under the heading of "clean energy" programs, on the grounds that such work might produce spin-off of interest to the civilian effort.

The new budget also creates a $25 million "central fund" for energy in Interior to support the "exploitation of promising technologies." This new money would seem to vest Interior with new authority over energy R & D, an arrangement that is consistent with the President's announced intention of transforming Interior into a Department of Natural Resources with central authority over national energy policy, both nuclear and nonnuclear.

—ROBERT GILLETTE

Environment

Is there anyone here who understands this book? These numbers don't make any sense to me.—William Ruckelshaus, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in discussing a portion of the budget with newsmen.

Mr. Ruckelshaus's tongue was planted firmly in cheek, but his complaint is nonetheless a common one. Federal budget documents are as much a masterwork of public relations as a proposal to Congress, and their lucidity sometimes rivals that of the Penn Central Railroad's annual report. But so far as one can divine from the voluminous documents released last week, the sector of the federal budget loosely described as "natural resources and environment" fared as well as any other category in a year when the watchword, more than ever, is inflationary control.

President Nixon has withheld about half the $11 billion authorized last year by Congress—over his veto—for water pollution control. At the same time though, the White House proposes to more than double the amount actually to be spent on pollution abatement (mostly for municipal sewage plants). This amount would rise from $727 million in fiscal 1973 to $1.6 billion in fiscal 1974.

In addition, the White House places a figure of $1.012 billion on its request for environmental R & D in fiscal 1974, an increase in obligations of $60 million. Much of this increase apparently would go into energy R & D.

A billion-dollar figure for environmental R & D may be a bit misleading, however, in two respects. For one, the definition of R & D is stretched to include such government services as maintenance of a weather satellite system and topographic mapping by the Geological Survey. Moreover, a close reading of the budget reveals several significant reductions in areas classically defined as R & D. Not the least of these involves a major "redirection" of the EPA's research program that tends to shift the agency away from development of pollution control technology and toward a narrower mission of supporting the agency's regulatory functions.

Thus, in fiscal 1974, the EPA's obligations for R & D would drop by $25 million to a level of $148 million. The single greatest cut, and potentially the most controversial, is an 88 percent or $15 million reduction in EPA's support of solid waste processing technology. In a news conference, Ruckelshaus maintained that this "new technology is in hand" and that it was now up to local communities to adapt it to their solid waste problems. This view, however, is not universally shared within the agency. "Obviously," one EPA official said privately, "this is a devastating reduction."

At the same time, the White House budget office proposes to cut 30 percent or $3 million from EPA's work on cleaner, alternative automobile engines and to terminate the agency's $5-million program to develop devices for scrubbing sulfur oxides from industrial stack gases. Ruckelshaus said that the EPA has fulfilled its responsibility of nurturing this technology to a point where "only engineering problems remain," although he acknowledged that the severity of these problems is a matter of great controversy in industry.

Other EPA research programs in radiation, pesticides, noise, water quality, and the social effects of pollution would remain static or rise slightly in the new budget.

Elsewhere, the Interior Department cut $24 million from its Office of Saline Water, marking the end of a desalination demonstration program. The $2 million that remains will be applied to "basic" research in desalination. In what appears to be a pattern throughout the environmental sector of the budget, this reduction was offset by the creation in Interior of a $25-million contingency fund for energy R & D. Thus, a few selective increases appear to balance out a few selective cuts, leaving the overall funding picture essentially static.—R.G.

Military

With an initial "post Vietnam" budget of $81.1 billion, the U.S. military establishment would have by far the largest peacetime budget ever, yet it is caught in an increasingly tight and troublesome fiscal situation. For the Pentagon the "peace dividend" comes largely in the shape of a struggle to meet huge payroll and retirement benefit costs, bear up under inflation, and, at the same time, modernize its forces by buying incredibly expensive new weapons—for instance, $19-million fighter aircraft (the F-14) and $1-billion submarines (the Trident).

In fiscal 1965, the last year before the massive U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the military budget was about $50 billion. By fiscal 1969, at the peak of the Vietnam war, the military budget—all of these figures include military assistance to foreign nations and defense-related