CANADIAN LAND RECLAMATION ASSOCIATION NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OPENING REMARKS

J.M. KING

CHAIRMAN, ALBERTA LAND CONSERVATION AND RECLAMATION COUNCIL

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you to this, the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Canadian Land Reclamation Association and to those of you from outside our province, a warm welcome to Alberta. This is the second Annual Meeting of your association to be held in Alberta. We consider this a recognition of the numerous people involved in reclamation within the province and are honored to be your host for the next few days. As a means of setting the stage for the technical presentations I would like to introduce you to the province, our approach to reclamation, and some of our activities.

The Alberta landscape is extremely varied from plains, to foothills, to mountains and all the transitional zones in between resulting in a land base that supports agriculture, forestry and wildlife as well as specific developments built by man. Additionally, we have been blessed with numerous petroleum, mineral and aggregate resources beneath the land surface which provide the base for extensive industrial activity. This multi-varied demand placed on the land base has resulted in Alberta recognizing the need to reclaim disturbed lands so that the long-term potential for varied land utilization is maintained.

At present we have: 11 operating major coal mines with over 19,000 acres disturbed, two oil sands mining operations with over 21,000 acres disturbed, one commercial in-situ oil sands operation under construction, over 65,000 acres affected by sand and gravel operations, an operating total of over 17,000 oil and gas wells with another 5,000 being drilled annually over 200,000 miles of pipelines of one size or another.

There is, therefore, a need for interaction between the developer, government, present and future land users and the general public to ensure that the views of each are considered. Within the province this has been accomplished through the public hearings process, the establishment of community based steering committees for major plains coal developments, constant dialogue with resource industry committees and ongoing discussion with specific companies.

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An organization such as the Canadian Land Reclamation Association is valuable because if fosters better communications and understandings between the concerned individuals, and provides a window through which information can be exchanged. This communication exchange crosses provincial boundaries as well as those of different industries, all happening in an informal setting. I believe this goes a long way towards keeping people abreast of the concerns of others, and the latest technology and helps to establish a sense of commonality regarding the objectives of reclamation.

The approach to reclamation in Alberta has tended to follow ten year cycles with respect to requirements and procedures.

Before 1963, there was no requirement for the reclamation of disturbed lands in Alberta. The only consideration was in the Mines and Minerals Act which required that mined areas be left in a non-hazardous condition based on safety.

In June of 1963, the Surface Reclamation Act was enacted to cover specified activities occurring on what are classified as surveyed lands. This Act created the Surface Reclamation Council and the reclamation certification process. The standards of the day could be called "Remedial" in that reclamation was a post-development activity with the return of the topographic land surface being the requirement. Soil conservation was not required.

In 1973, the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act was passed. The concept of the Council was continued. The changes in reclamation requirements included the need for soil conservation, the need for revegetation and a requirement that industry plan reclamation as part of the development planning. Not only was integrated planning required but the government responded with the integrated committee review system. Research support and cooperation was initiated as was a flexible approach with respect to procedural system.

From 1983 and on in to the future, the approach has been and will continue to be to review and evaluate existing procedures and legislation in light of new found knowledge, and technical and economic change. This effort includes the ongoing review of the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act, the evaluation of different approval procedures and their overlap and the development of updated information packages for industry. The intention is to simplify the systems and reduce the duplication while still maintaining a level of flexibility that permits a response to changed conditions and maintains a balance between environmental protection and the development of our resources.

The reclamation activities of the Land Conservation and Reclamation Council occur on three fronts: Administration of the Act and regulations; reclamation operations; and research.

- The administration of the Act and the regulations for designated surface operations is the major activity and involves the review of applications, issuing of approvals, enforcement, and certification.
- Since 1976, the Council has been conducting the actual reclamation of areas mined prior to 1963 on lands owned by the province. This program has included reclamation of such sites as municipally owned landfill sites and sewage lagoons. In all, more than 800 projects have been completed resulting in more than 8,000 acres of reclaimed land being made available for other useful activities.
- Finally, the Council is the funding authority for reclamation research in Alberta. The Reclamation Research Technical Advisory Committee recommends and monitors studies which must meet a specific need identified by either industry or the review agencies. Most of the projects result from industry initiation with some being jointly funded. Industry is involved in the review process.

The results of this cooperation are such projects as the Battle River Research Project, and Plains Hydrology Research Project and a major effort with the Oil Sands Environmental Study Group. You will be hearing about these efforts in the presentations tomorrow morning.

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Also, a major planning venture related to the development of the Villeneuve gravel deposits near Edmonton has been initiated where the local municipality, the Department of the Environment and the aggregate industry are cooperating in the development of plans for the long-term reclamation of the area.

These practices, we are aware are similarly happening between government, industry and the public in other provinces, and in the United States as evidenced by the number and variety of presentations to be made at this conference.

This effort must be continued so that industry is able to develop the resources while still ensuring the return of the land base for future users. Flexibility must also be integral to any system:

- 1. to permit adjustments by industry to economic changes;
- to permit the introduction of new development technology into operations; and
- to encourage the development and use of updated reclamation information.

With so much happening in so many industries and at so many levels, there is an overriding need to maintain support for active interaction. This includes groups such as the Canadian Land Reclamation Association. These groups have an important role to play in the dissemination of information to all sectors as well as providing a forum for the personal exchange of views and ideas. With continued and improved dialogue as provided by conferences such as this one we will all improve our level of knowledge and recognition of the other persons' concerns. The benefits will accrue for our mutual betterment now and into the future. I am sure the many technical presentations will be enlightening and thoughtprovoking. I encourage all of you to get to know your counterparts, exchange some ideas, and gain a better understanding of each others' concerns.

Once again, welcome to Alberta and enjoy your stay.

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NINTH ANNUAL MEETING CANADIAN LAND RECLAMATION ASSOCIATION

RECLAMATION IN MOUNTAINS, FOOTHILLS AND PLAINS: DOING IT RIGHT!

> AUGUST 21-24, 1984 Calgary, Alberta, Canada



BANADIAN LAND RECLAMATION ASSOCIATION

NINTH ANNUAL MEETING

RECLAMATION IN MOUNTAINS, FOOTHILLS AND PLAINS

DOING IT RIGHT!

AUGUST 21 - 24, 1984

CONVENTION CENTRE

CALGARY, ALBERTA

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