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Given by:

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentleman, and Learned Experts in the field of reclamation, I must admit to not being an expert on reclamation. In fact, of all the people in this room, I am undoubtedly one of the least knowledgeable on reclamation. All of which naturally raises the question, why am I, instead of any of the formidable number of authorities on reclamation, speaking to this group tonight? The answer is really quite simple. About ten days ago, while I was in Toronto, my good friend, Jake McDonald, phoned my boss, looking for a speaker. My boss, long renowned for his magnanimity in such matters, very kindly volunteered my services in absentia.

Nevertheless, in spite of my lack of expertise, I want it clearly understood that I am in favour of reclamation—whatever that means. I am also in favour of motherhood, nuclear disarmament, peace in our time, and numerous other issues.

My problems in preparing a speech for you were, first, my lack of knowledge of the subject, and second, the lack of time for preparation. After going through a pile of technical papers about two feet high on the weekend, I asked myself what can I possibly tell these experts that they don't already know, or has not already been said "Ad Infinitum"?

While I was trying to outline this talk on Sunday, my wife asked me what "Reclamation" meant — and you know, I really couldn't give her a straightforward answer. So I thought this is at least a good start for a speech — I will define "Reclamation" for the experts! Easier said than done.

After pouring over the technical literature for many hours, I didn't come up with a definition to end all definitions -- but I sure learned some good buzz-words. How about:

Biogeoclimatic
Ungulate

Early Seral
Bayonet Blade Technique
Limnological.

In desperation, I finally turned to my trusty Oxford Universal Dictionary, which gives several definitions for reclamation:

"The action of protesting" - Well, that seems to fit, as far as it goes.

"The action of calling or bringing back from wrongdoing - The action of reclaiming from barbarism." Unfortunately, there are too many people who would accept that definition.

"The making of land fit for cultivation" - That might fit somewhere, but certainly not in Northern B.C. or the Yukon, where very little of the land occupied by mines was fit for cultivation in the first place.

None of these definitions really seemed to describe reclamation as it applies to mines in British Columbia; clearly, I had to seek the answer elsewhere. I would ask people who were involved in reclamation in some way or other.

I ASKED THE MANAGER OF A MINE; He said, "Reclamation is when I spend \$500 an acre to turn land that was originally worth \$25 an acre into land that will be worth \$25 an acre."

I ASKED A GOVERNMENT M.L.A.; He said, "Reclamation - That's how you sell B.C. Hydro bonds."

I ASKED A TRADE UNION OFFICIAL; He said, "Reclamation is something the company should spend a lot more money on - unless they're willing to pay higher wages!"

I ASKED A RESIDENT OF A SMALL REMOTE NORTHERN MINING COMMUNITY: He said, "Reclamation - That's what the mine does to keep the tourists from the Lower Mainland from complaining."

I ASKED AN AGRONOMIST Who occasionally does consulting work for mining companies: He said, "Reclamation: That's how you make \$500 a day selling grass seed."

Obviously, reclamation means different things to different people. It reminds me of that familiar old expression – "Reclamation is in the eye of the beholder."

Anyway, since I have failed to define it for you, let me at least make some observations on various attitudes towards reclamation, and indeed towards mining itself.

A few years ago, not long after the reclamation amendments were added to the Mines Regulation Act, I was operating a mine in the Southern Interior, and we had recently gone to some trouble and expense to get a pretty fair growth of Alfalfa on the downstream slope of our tailing dam. I was rather proud of this feat (although my own contribution was negligible) because in my opinion, we had actually improved upon the original land. The neighbouring rancher liked it too, because he was continually cutting our fence to let his cattle graze on it. At any rate, a young man employed by the Department of Mines dropped in one day to see this biological marvel, and I personally escorted him through the waist high verdure, taking care to avoid the numerous cow-flaps. Bursting with pride I said, "Well, what do you think about that?" He replied in a deprecatory manner, "Well – It's O.K. – as far as it goes. I mean, it's green all right, but it's only cosmetic reclamation."

Completely shattered, I asked what that meant. If I understood correctly, his view was that the land should be returned as nearly as possible to its original state – not improved upon!

A constant source of amazement to me is the difference in attitudes held by many people concerning land alienated by Highways, and land used by Mining. In Canada there is about two hundred times as much land occupied by Highways, in perpetuity, as is temporarily occupied by mines. Not much mining is done on arable land; much of our

Highways System, especially in B.C., is on prime agricultural land. The Government seeks accolades for its plan to alienate forever, thousands of acres in the construction of the Coquihalla Highway. Another way of looking at it is that a postage stamp on the floor of a large living room would represent the proportion of Canada occupied by mining; in B.C. there is probably not more than 80 square miles disturbed by mining. For those who claim that mining has a significant impact on wildlife because of its removal of wildlife habitat, compared to other forms of land use, I say that you are stretching your credibility well beyond the breaking point.

I read recently about a mining operation being built on remote mountainous terrain in the United States, the power lines to the mine were installed in a zig-zag pattern to hide them from view; utility poles were painted green to match the scenery in this remote area; horses rather than bulldozers were used where trees had to be felled. Naturally, these activities added to the cost of the venture and were borne by the mining company. When I read this I thought of the great hydro transmission lines so artfully concealed from view in the Fraser Canyon.

In 1972, just prior to that Provincial election in which the electorate of B.C. decided to sample for a time the hitherto forbidden fruits of Socialism, I had the interesting experience of attending in Kamloops, a public hearing at which a consortium of three mining companies presented, and defended, a proposal to erect a copper smelter at Clinton, B.C. The only people who spoke in favour of the proposal were the spokesman for the mining companies and some residents of Clinton. The people who spoke against it and there were many, were mainly residents of the Lower Mainland; they spoke passionately and with conviction against the construction of a smelter in Clinton or anywhere else in B.C. Was their eloquence prompted by concern for the people of Clinton, or by a desire to keep the interior of the Province a perpetual

Parkland for the occasional use of the city - dwellers from the South?

The application for the construction of the smelter was never acknowledged by the newly elected Government, and of course it was not built. I don't really know whether the people of B.C. wanted a smelter at that time, or not, but certainly the very vocal, very articulate group of Vancouverites parachuted into that hearing did not want one.

In pursuing my career in the B.C. mining industry over the last 18 years, I have had occasion to see a lot of the Province from the windows of airplanes. If one directs his attention to man-made disturbances of the surface, one reaches a few inescapable conclusions:

FIRST: Agriculture and grazing land occupy quite a lot of area.

SECOND: So do towns and cities. Highways, roads and rights of way are also highly visible.

THIRD: The things I've mentioned so far occupy land that is usually well suited for agriculture and is, in many cases, prime bottom land.

FOURTH: As you might expect, forest operations and the roads associated with them are very much in evidence.

FIFTH: Something else that catches your eye, is the impressive power distribution system - huge metal towers stretching 3 in straight lines as far as the eye can see, through denuded aisles in the forests; lots of land used up, but you can't get along without electricity - any more than you can get along without the products of mines - metals. There is a pretty good likelihood that you would see all of the things I've mentioned. However, you more than likely would not see a mine - because there aren't many around, and those that are, don't occupy much space. Less than 2/100% of the province's land areas as a matter of fact!

Why does mining, with its comparatively miniscule use of land deserve the intense scrutiny that it receives?

It should be apparent to you that mining companies are subject to different rules while performing the same functions as other endeavours.

Do you recall a few years ago, many mining companies were enjoying, for a time, unusually good profits – referred to by some as "Windfall" or "Rip-Off" profits -- although I cannot fathom how searching diligently for something, at great expense, for many years, can be called a "Windfall" when you find it – that's like saying Sir Edmund Hillary had a windfall when he reached the top of Everest. Well, when those profits were being made, quite a large element in our society wanted to nationalize the mines; others wanted to, and did confiscate much of the profits; some mines eventually were nationalized.

Yet, a few short years later, when mining is not so good – many mines are closing with resultant lay-offs – profits are down and in some cases there are losses – guess what? Those same bards of economic wisdom again say – We must nationalize the mines! No other industry that I know of is subjected to this form of idiocy! Even now, mines are the most highly taxed form of industry. There are other examples of the preferential – or should I say, discriminatory, treatment received by the mining industry!

Who reclaims forest fires?

Have you ever seen the Hope slide? Do you think it is pretty? Why doesn't someone reclaim it?

Where do you think the tons of chemical fertilizers used by farmers in B.C. end up? A large portion ends up in the watershed as the

annual bloom of some of our lakes.

Do you think municipalities are required to deal with domestic sewage in the same way the mines are?

Are the same reclamation standards applied to the forest industry as to the mining industry?

I am not the slightest bit ashamed of the record of the mining industry in this Province with regard to reclamation, pollution, or conservation. I began to work here in 1960 when the Craigmont mine was being constructed; that was 10 years before the Pollution Control Board or regulations on tailing dams. When the Legislation was introduced, not one change was required in our waste treatment system at Craigmont.

To quote a good friend of mine: "The B.C. Interior was first opened up by placer miners during the 19th century. They prospected every river and stream in the Province and they worked every gravel deposit that showed a colour of gold. In the process, they dirtied the water, consumed forests, built towns and roads, and in the first 70 years produced \$700,000,000 of new mineral wealth."

Today, scarcely 100 years later, there is barely a sign that they passed through history. This is evidence that nature, if left alone, will in time heal the scars of man's occupation. Reclamation of disturbed land surfaces should be directed toward accelerating the natural healing process of nature." End of quote.

Incidentally, I actually did find a definition of reclamation that seems to be appropriate to British Columbia. I found it in a short article in the April, 1977 *Western Miner*, entitled "Reclamation of Surface Coal Mines". I commend the article to your attention.

Here's the definition.....

"Surface mining can affect the environment by interfering with the quality of air, land and water, and through these, animal and plant life. Reclamation is considered to comprise those remedial measures necessary to alleviate or eliminate conditions arising from surface mining. Rehabilitation is the next stage, comprising land development for specialized and more productive uses contributing to the economic or social improvement of an area."

Reclamation is a "Motherhood" issue. It is impossible to argue against it, nor do I want to. British Columbia can have any degree of reclamation it wants – for a price. You can have Butchart Gardens, if you want, in abandoned pits – for a price. You can take reclamation standards that are applied in populated agricultural areas in the U.S. and apply them to B.C. mountain tops – for a price. The industry will pay the price in the short run, but will the people of the Province benefit in the long run?

Most of the people attending this conference have a vested interest in reclamation. By that I mean you earn your living from it – the more reclamation is required, the more money you make, or the more important you become. But let me remind you of the law of diminishing returns – if reclamation, and other regulatory constraints become increasingly onerous – if clearing permit requirements for mining projects through the bureaucratic maze takes longer and longer – up to two years as is now the case – then reclamation will cease to be a concern – there will be nothing to reclaim.

Do you remember not too long ago, Bryce MacKasey, Federal Minister of Labour, boasting that Canada had just introduced the most generous unemployment scheme in the world?

Well, there is a tendency for the makers of rules in various jurisdictions to try to outdo each other in the toughness of their rules – (by that I mean toughness to industry). I remember a Provincial civil servant in B.C., who shall remain unnamed, when referring to a certain section of the mines regulation act boasting, "We have the most stringent regulations in North America."

I suggest to the makers of rules that you should strive to have, not the most stringent rules in North America, but the most sensible – bearing in mind what the country can afford, and what its citizens are willing to sacrifice for. I refer you to a headline in the Vancouver Sun, on the 21st of February – "Put Jobs Above Environment". The lead paragraph said, "With almost one million workers unemployed, it would be an act of criminal irresponsibility to place jobs at risk, even for serious environmental considerations, the Canadian Labour Congress said." This is an extreme view, but I suspect it is held by more people than you think.

The rules that govern our industry should be appropriate to British Columbia, and to the times in which we live, but they should not single out mining for greater punitive action than other disturbances to the environment.

Reclamation of disturbed land surfaces should be directed toward accelerating the natural healing process of nature – and the degree of acceleration should depend on the location of the disturbance.

In closing tonight, I ask you to interpret my remarks, not as a criticism of what has been done in regulating the reclamation of mining land in B.C., on the contrary but as a caution to the makers. of rules to resist the pressures of certain minorities, whether they are sincerely well-meaning, or are motivated by self-interest, to regulate our industry out of existence.

Finally, I would like to read to you a short parable I clipped out of a magazine quite some time ago. I'm sure many of you have read it, but please bear with me for the sake of those who haven't.

In the beginning god created heaven and earth.

He was then faced with a class action lawsuit for failing to file an environmental impact statement with HEPA (Heavenly Environmental Protection Agency), an angelically staffed agency dedicated to keeping the universe pollution free.

God was granted a temporary permit for the heavenly portion of the project, but was issued a cease and desist order on the earthly part, pending further investigation by HEPA.

Upon completion of the construction permit application and environmental impact statement, God appeared before the HEPA council to answer questions.

When asked why he began these projects in the first place, he simply replied that he liked to be creative.

This was not considered an adequate reason and he would be required to substantiate this further.

HEPA was unable to see any practical use for earth since "The earth was void and empty and darkness was upon the face of the earth."

Then God said, "Let there be light."

He should never have brought up this point since one member of the council who was active in the Sierrangel Club asked "How was the light to be made? Would there be strip mining? What about thermal pollution? Air pollution?" God explained the light would

come from a huge ball of fire in the sky.

Nobody on the Council really understood this, but it was provisionally accepted assuming (1) there would be no smog or smoke resulting from the ball of fire, (2) a separate burning permit would be required, and (3) since continuous light would be a waste of energy it should be dark at least one-half of the time.

So God agreed to divide light and darkness and he would call light day, and the darkness night. (The Council expressed no interest with in-house semantics).

When asked how the earth would be covered, God said, "Let there be firmament made amidst the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters."

One ecologically radical Council member accused him of double talk, but the Council tabled action since God would be required first to file for a permit from the ABLM (Angelic Bureau of Land Management) and further would be required to obtain water permits from appropriate agencies involved.

The Council asked if there would be only water and firmament and God said, "Let earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed."

The Council agreed, as long as native seed would be used.

About future development God also said, "Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature having life, and the fowl that may fly over the earth."

Here again, the Council took no formal action since this would require approval of the Fish & Game Commission coordinated with Heavenly

Wildlife Federation and Audobongelic Society.

It appeared everything was in order until God stated he wanted to complete the project in six days.

At this time he was advised by the Council that his timing was completely out of the question...HEPA would require a minimum of 180 days to review the application and environmental impact statement, then there would be the public hearings.

It would take 10 to 12 months before a permit could be granted.

God said, "To hell with it!"