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Panel members are requested to address themselves to four questions.

1. Are alpine and other bighorn sheep winter ranges in danger of destruction?
2. Should sheep ranges be preserved and/or rehabilitated?
3. What is being done today to achieve a better harmony and to prevent permanent damage to critical ranges?
4. What should and can be done in the future and what are the possibilities for preventing protection and reclamation?

I came to Alberta in 1968 and there was very little work or concern expressed about sheep habitations except for in a few areas and although there was probably more concern expressed, it was known by only a few informed people. In 1969 we got some idea of some of the big coal mining activities going on and in 1971 we learned the extent of exploration plans. We were faced with antiquated legislation at that time. Government mechanisms such as the Environment Conservation Authority have since been created.

The Fish and Wildlife Division was caught in the middle, literally - no staff to handle the situation. There now is a Mineral Surface Rights Committee and the Fish and Wildlife Division have a representative on this Committee. We now have more staff - two biologists on land use and one technician and are in the process of setting up a land-use/habitat section with a section head equivalent to our research and management section heads.

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WILDLIFE - MINERAL RESOURCE CONFLICTS  
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The comparison of the conflict between coal developments and bighorn sheep in Alberta has been based upon sheep winter ranges. Our feeling is that while summer ranges are vast, wintering areas, which occur in light snowfall zones or on wind swept slopes, are in short supply. In addition, sheep appear to be labile enough in the summer to avoid disturbed areas, however they are physically and perhaps behaviorally unwilling to do this during winters.

At present we have some 388,000 acres of bighorn sheep winter range in Alberta, outside of the National Parks. Approximately 80,000 acres, or about 21 per cent of this area, lies within existing coal dispositions. Since about 90 per cent of the mineable coal properties in the Province are now under lease, the general picture reflected by this data should be representative of what we can expect in the next decade.