

Alberta Natural Gas Company

area, and I believe we are justified in saying that there are strong indications that there is a very considerable gas and oil potential in this district. The government is desirous that further exploration be undertaken, but it must be obvious that the greatest incentive for the undertaking of this work is that provision be made for market facilities if and when oil or gas or both are discovered in quantity.

The nearest market area for northwestern Alberta and northeastern British Columbia producing areas will be the Pacific coast points of British Columbia, and if the projected pipe line is built along the route suggested through the northern points, it will provide an available and accessible market for these products.

In considering the question of the route of the pipe line, it should be noted that the northern route would add to the gas potential of the province of Alberta that of the area described in British Columbia.

In conclusion may I say my government is most anxious that natural gas be made available to the people of British Columbia if and when the government of Alberta determines that in the interests of the people of Alberta a permit for exportation can properly be granted.

The government of British Columbia is prepared to take any reasonable steps within its power to facilitate the building of a pipe line system from Alberta to and through the province of British Columbia, and will be prepared to join with Alberta in supporting any applications that may be made to the federal authority in order to secure and make possible the building of the lines.

I would point out that the government of British Columbia has already advised the government of Canada of the resolution which they passed in regard to this matter. I continue:

We in British Columbia congratulate the people of Alberta on the successful oil exploration program being carried out in the province, and hope that the work now being carried on will continue to meet with success in greater measure year after year. One of the main factors which actuate our interest in the present project is that we wish to make it possible that British Columbia areas will be explored and will enjoy a like experience, and in the not too distant future oil and gas production in the province of British Columbia, particularly in the district which I have mentioned, will be able to share in the markets available, thus making a contribution to the general well-being and prosperity of Canada.

I think, Mr. Chairman, the house will agree that is a very worth-while submission by the attorney general of British Columbia. I ask hon. members to give the views expressed by that government their very earnest consideration before we allow the sanctioning of any other pipe line routes.

I was quite interested in some of what appeared to me to be the rather evasive statements made by the chief witness for the Alberta Natural Gas Company. At page 65 of the proceedings of the standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines there was a question asked by the hon. member for Edmonton West. He asked Mr. Dixon,

the witness, what his opinion was with regard to the main supply of gas. Mr. Dixon replied: . . . this is a matter of opinion—but to my mind the main supply of gas is in the southern part of Alberta.

Then the hon. member for Edmonton West asked:

Do you not think that situation is changing fast?

The witness replied:

No, sir, I think it is just the opposite.

In other words, the witness in this particular instance tried to prove what I am sure a man who is eminently well acquainted with the oil business must have known was not correct, and was an evasion. I cannot bring myself to believe that he could have been as stupid as that unless he was trying to be evasive. In order to check the matter again I referred it to the dominion geologist who informed me that as of the present date probably the largest gas reserves that have already been developed lie more in the south than in the north, but that anybody who has studied the geological structure and the recent developments in the province of Alberta must realize that the northern area is developing much more rapidly. He said that he would state without any hesitation that the greatest bulk of our natural gas resources will be found in northern Alberta. I said, "In that case you would say that Edmonton was much nearer to the centre of the gas resources of Alberta than Calgary". He said unquestionably that would be the case.

In conclusion may I reiterate that we are not delaying Alberta Natural Gas Company in getting on with their business by refusing them a charter to incorporate a dominion company at this time. All they have to do is to go to the Alberta natural gas conservation board which, as I have said, before, has stated that they are willing to hear submissions from any responsible company. The Westcoast Transmission Company, which already has a charter, has stated that they would not raise any objection to the hearing of their submission. If the Alberta Natural Gas Company is acting in good faith and really desires to build an all-Canadian pipe line I can see no reason in the world why they should not make their submission to the Alberta conservation board as to what route they intend to follow. As I said before, I am sure I speak for every member of the house when I say that if they convince us that they really desire to build an all-Canadian route they will have no difficulty in getting their charter through the House of Commons.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Mr. Chairman, I do not suppose it is very often that a man is believed when he says that he