

Conservation of Natural Resources

oil has been or is being found. That idea is absolutely fallacious. I hope that somehow or other we can impress upon our C.C.F. friends that the kind of thing they have been telling in Saskatchewan and British Columbia about what Alberta is doing with respect to oil is wrong.

Men who pretend to be as much interested in the development of Canadian resources and welfare as these gentlemen certainly can afford to tell the truth about what is being done in one province that is leading the way in respect to policies which they claim to be so interested in putting into operation in the country. One hon. member says that he has never mentioned oil. I am thankful that he is not responsible for the kind of thing I found in Saskatchewan a week ago. There certainly was some nonsense there, and the people who were spreading it seemed to be so sure they were right that you could not pound the truth into their heads with a claw hammer.

Mr. Argue: Did you have a hammer with you?

Mr. Blackmore: I will have to take one along next time, together with a cold chisel. The people are entitled to the truth. I should like to read one or two excerpts from an Alberta government publication entitled "They belong to you" in order to set this matter clearly before everyone anxious to get the truth. In this document, published officially by an Alberta government minister, we find the following reference to oil:

All development in Alberta is carried on under the authority of leases which set out the terms under which development must be carried on.

The government is always in the position where it can change its form of lease and the terms of the lease as conditions change so as to assure proper development and fair returns.

I ask the hon. member for Cape Breton South and anyone else who is anxious to get the truth: How on earth can you get from that passage anything but a definite declaration that the Alberta government is absolutely in control of every parcel of land that at any time has belonged to the Alberta government and which is capable of producing oil? Another quotation on the same subject from the same document, referring to leases and the general arrangement of managing oil, is as follows:

By this means the government retains at least half the area to be disposed of by sealed tender to the highest bidder as and when and on terms and conditions set out by the government. This tender is for the right to lease and produce oil.

The Alberta government gives no claim whatsoever to even one square inch of the

land of Alberta. Another quotation is as follows:

By this method the government is preventing monopoly and obtaining all possible out of the development of its natural resources. The lessee pays \$1 per acre per year for all land leased and a royalty of from five to fifteen per cent according to production or a straight royalty of twelve and one-half per cent. Royalty on existing leases can be raised to 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent.

That again is a definite declaration that the government is completely in control of land even when leased. Then there is the following reference to the petroleum and natural gas conservation board, which is an Alberta board:

The petroleum and natural gas conservation board has full power:

- (a) to prevent waste;
- (b) to say where drilling can be done;
- (c) to obtain any or all information about the wells;
- (d) to say how much each well can produce.

There is one more positive assertion that the province is completely in control and in complete ownership of all the lands on which oil is being produced where such lands had not been alienated from the province before the present administration took office. As the hon. member for Peace River pointed out this afternoon, it is important to note that before the Alberta government got a chance at these lands certain men in the dominion government at Ottawa away back before 1905 had alienated almost 50 per cent of the total oil-producing lands in that province from the future government of Alberta. Those lands were given away to friends; there is no doubt about that. Alberta did not get any kind of control over her resources until 1931, and then she got only what was left. When lands have been alienated, the government of the province of Alberta has very little chance of doing anything about them, and it certainly has no right to be blamed for failure to control those lands.

As we are dealing with resources, there are one or two other matters which I believe are worthy of note. Since we are discussing the conservation of the resources of the Dominion of Canada we are naturally deeply interested in what each province is doing in respect to the conservation of natural resources. That provides a reason for giving some additional information to the house which I am sure every hon. member will desire to possess. I should like to quote from "The Alberta Story," which is a government of Alberta document published