

how Canadians who are also Albertans, would want it. Don't try to turn the rest of Canada against us, Mr. Trudeau.

Whether we are talking about language or energy, Mr. Speaker, Albertans are the brothers of eastern Canadians. We will not be the tools in a ploy to set up an energy dictatorship. We will oppose policies inspired not by the needs of Canada but by Liberal desperation.

● (2140)

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, as my contribution to this debate tonight I propose to tell the House of the particular significance of energy in my constituency of Medicine Hat and, more specifically, the city of Medicine Hat and the close town of Redcliff. These two locations, only five miles apart, comprise approximately one half the total population of my constituency of Medicine Hat. In addition, I propose to try to indicate to my colleagues the impact of our present energy debate on myself as a native Albertan from the viewpoint of a rural agricultural land owner of both surface rights and mineral rights. May I first point out that southeastern Alberta's interests are mainly concerned with the production, use and export to other parts of Canada of natural gas. While there may be some oil deposits and production, it is our natural gas that I will be commenting on in particular this evening.

First, a brief history of gas discovery and development in the constituency I represent. Natural gas was first discovered in 1883 by the CPR when boring for water at a point 40 miles west of Medicine Hat. Gas was struck at about 700 feet and was used to light and heat a railway section house. Later, in 1891, Sir William van Horne, then president of the CPR, offered to loan a drilling outfit to the town of Medicine Hat to be used to locate coal beneath the townsite. No coal of any importance was located, but a strong gas gusher came in at 660 feet. This became Medicine Hat's first gas well. Gas from this well was used in commercial operation by Charles Coulter to burn limestone and manufacture lime for his building operations. In addition, I should point out that this particular gas well was also the first gas well in the province of Alberta.

In 1892 the CPR drilled a second gas well adjacent to their railway station. This well was used primarily to entertain visiting dignitaries who came through on the railway. They did this by rather spectacular blowoffs that were fired to illustrate this tremendous natural resource below the city of Medicine Hat. One such blow-off for the benefit of Rudyard Kipling prompted the author to describe Medicine Hat as the city "with all hell for a basement". Later, in 1899, Mr. Coulter drilled a well in his backyard and used the gas for lighting and heating not only his own home but a number of his neighbours homes as well. In about 1900 or 1901 the town drilled five gas wells that were used by their waterworks plant and supplied all residences. This was the start of a city-owned utility system that still operates most successfully for both gas and electric power.

About this same period an enterprising promoter from Sarnia, Ontario, came west and settled just south of my own post office of Walsh, Alberta. His name was J. A. Grant. He established a very large ranching operation called the Sarnia Ranching Company. It was financed, of

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course, by risk capital from the Sarnia community. Grant had considerable know-how in the drilling industry and was probably the first commercial gas well driller in southern Alberta. Of course, he picked up this knowledge from his experience around Sarnia.

In the late twenties and thirties a series of wildcat oil wells were drilled east of Medicine Hat, all using ponderous hand-erected wooden towers and walking beams for the drilling action. It is worth noting that all these earlier wells were drilled in the expectation of finding oil and that the gas found in all of them was of very little practical and commercial use. One such well, known as the Draisin oil well, ran wild and burned for years in the Many Island Lake community just north of my ranch where it acted as a landmark and beacon when we trailed cattle across that open-range country.

As a schoolboy in Medicine Hat, two features involving natural gas have become solidly etched in my early memories. First, while learning to skate on the Saskatchewan River in winter, we were able to locate gas bubbling through ice cracks and light it to warm our hands and feet. Second, all our streets in Medicine Hat, even in my own school days, were lighted by gas street lights that were never turned off. From that beginning, Mr. Speaker, gas production has come a long way to the present day state of development. To illustrate this, I would like to bring members up to date with some figures. Here are some production figures for a 75-mile producing area centring at Medicine Hat. That is a block 75 miles west, south and north, but only extending 30 miles east to the Saskatchewan border. To the end of October of this year, 2,597 gas wells were producing 248 billion cubic feet of natural gas. There are 718 oil wells producing 18.9 million barrels of oil. Percentage-wise, this represents about 10 per cent of Alberta's gas production and 2 per cent of our provincial oil production. In addition, this production comes from 60 per cent of Alberta's gas wells and 5 per cent of our oil wells.

The large percentage of gas wells is related to closer spacing and lower drilling costs of these wells due to relatively shallow production depths. These depths range from 1,000 to 2,000 feet. Not included in any of these statistics, supplied by the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board, is the tremendous potential of natural gas reserves under the 1,000-square mile Suffield defence research reservation just a few miles north of Medicine Hat.

Only this morning the *Globe and Mail* in a special report commented with some startling observations on these reserves. These observations are important enough that portions of this news item should be quoted for the record. This is a quotation from an article in this morning's *Globe and Mail* headed "Suffield gas prospects prove up."

● (2150)

The 1,000 square miles of the Suffield military reserve in southeastern Alberta are proving up a substantial natural gas potential following exploratory drilling under the auspices of the provincial government.

Petroleum industry experts have already suggested that the Suffield range could ultimately become the largest gas field in Canada, at least until gas finds in the Arctic islands or the Mackenzie River delta are developed.