

*Alberta Natural Gas Company*

Last evening the hon. member for Kootenay East (Mr. Byrne) said that he was satisfied with the decision of the board of transport commissioners, that whatever decision they might make he was quite prepared to accept. May I remind him that parliament is the policy setting body. Parliament set the all-Canadian policy in the post-confederation years for the building of the Canadian Pacific railway. Parliament set the policy for Trans-Canada Air Lines, and only last session this parliament set the policy for the trans-Canada highway. Let the parliament set the policy in this instance and instruct the board of transport commissioners that gas from Alberta may go to the Pacific coast only over an all-Canadian route. I have ascertained, and the committee could have ascertained also by calling independent witnesses, that such a route is feasible.

May I pause here to remind hon. members that the Westcoast Transmission Company, which has been incorporated, have withdrawn their application for a route through Kingsgate to the United States, and as further evidence of their good faith have submitted expert testimony extending for almost a month to the Alberta conservation board in connection with their request for permission to build over the Yellowhead pass route.

I am opposing the passage of this bill to incorporate the Alberta Natural Gas Company because I feel that this company has not been entirely frank, either with the committee or with the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe). Does anyone in this house believe that the minister would have written to the city of Vancouver as he did unless he had been assured of an all-Canadian route? The minister used these words:

My information is that the new company is proposing to build this line through all-Canadian territory and to serve all Vancouver points before taking the line into the United States.

I am quite sure the minister never would have written that letter unless he had been assured by Mr. Dixon or other principals of the Alberta Natural Gas Company that that was their intention. I certainly have no difficulty in making up my mind as to which of the gentlemen in question I believe. Probably hon. members would be interested in the views of the government of British Columbia in regard to this matter. With your permission I should like to quote from the testimony given by the attorney general of that province, the Hon. Gordon Wismer, before the Alberta conservation board on February 7 last. Mr. Wismer said:

We are and have been, ever since the construction of gas pipe lines has been under consideration, strongly supporting the proposal that such a line should be built from northern Alberta into and

[Mr. Gibson.]

through British Columbia and thence, if sufficient gas is available, to the Pacific northwest states of the United States of America.

I took that position before the transport board. We are, of course, assuming that it will be shown before the proper tribunal that this route is feasible and practicable as we understand it to be.

This route, if followed, will assure that the domestic and industrial requirements of the people of British Columbia will be a matter of first consideration, and it seems to us that this objective cannot be reached in any other way.

I would point out to hon. members that that is the considered view of the government of British Columbia. I continue to quote Mr. Wismer's remarks:

That is as we are advised at the present time.

More important than this consideration, however, is the fact that the northern route will undoubtedly afford the opportunity of great industrial development and expansion in both northern Alberta and through the considerable territory in British Columbia which lies in the path of the projected route.

And of first importance, in our view and submission, and here we may be of some assistance in the disposal of the primary question at issue, is the following:

The northeastern area of British Columbia lying to the east of the Rocky mountains in the Peace river block is part of the sedimentary basin which underlies the northwest portion of the province of Alberta. My information is that there are about 50 million acres in this area which may be considered to be potential oil and gas lands.

May I just interject to say that when I read that I called up the dominion geologist, Dr. Hume, whose name is familiar to most hon. members because his standing in the geological field in Canada is the highest. I asked Dr. Hume if the 50 million acres of potential oil and gas lands in British Columbia would be at all comparable with a similar acreage in Alberta, and he told me that those oil and gas lands in British Columbia unquestionably offered the same potential for the production of oil and gas as a similar 50 million acres in Alberta. I just pause there to point out how extremely important it is to the people of British Columbia and to the development of the northern portion of the province that this gas pipe line go through that area rather than the Crownsnest pass route or through the states of Washington and Montana.

We have been told that it is only feasible to construct the one pipe line from the natural gas resources of Alberta to the Pacific coast. If by any chance that pipe line should go by the southern route or through the United States these 50 million acres of potential oil and gas lands would remain undeveloped. If that should be the case the development of the hinterland of British Columbia would be retarded for generations. I quote further from the submission by Mr. Wismer:

The government of British Columbia and others have carried out some exploration work in this