

Importance of Bore-hole Records and Capping of Gas Wells

AN ADDRESS BY

W. J. DICK

Mining Engineer of the Commission of Conservation

ACCURATE records of bore-holes made on Crown lands in Canada have never been kept. Abandoned gas and oil wells, as well as test wells, are never marked, and, in time, all knowledge of their situation is lost. With the single exception of Ontario, no province even requires that such wells should be plugged. As a result, such bore-holes become sources of serious danger to those who may be, at a later date, exploiting other minerals in their vicinity. At the same time, the Governments are neglecting a valuable means of obtaining information with respect to the geology of the country.

It is the purpose of this paper, therefore, to show the necessity that exists for filing with the Governments concerned all records of bore-holes made on Crown lands in Canada. While special mention is made of wells drilled in prospecting for natural gas and oil, nevertheless the same arguments hold good, to a greater or less extent, with regard to holes drilled for other purposes such as prospecting for coal, water, salt, etc.

In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, the North-west Territories and in the Railway Belt and Peace River Block in British Columbia, mining rights are under Federal control, while in the other provinces they are subject to Provincial regulations. In Ontario, ample statutory provision is made to guard against the waste of natural gas and for the plugging of all abandoned wells,* but no province requires the lessees of mining rights to file a record of the actual situation of bore-holes or logs of bore-holes showing the thickness and kind of formations passed through.

* *Statutes of Ontario*, 7 Ed VII, Chap. 47, 1907.