

Boundary Pipeline Corporation

It might seem strange that we of the province of Quebec who have inexhaustible waterpower resources at our disposal should ask the western provinces to supply us with natural gas, while it is being alleged in certain circles that electricity substitutes favourably for gas. It is true, I think, in a very great number of cases, but there necessarily exist certain sectors of our economy where gas is better than electricity.

We find proof of this in and around the city of Quebec, where there is such a large supply of electricity that some is left over, and where people nowadays use propane gas, imported from the United States.

As a passing remark, I would like to point out the case of a young man who used to live in my constituency. He is building today, near the town of Levis, a warehouse for storing propane gas, which is to be distributed in that district. It does seem to prove that in spite of our abundant waterpower resources, we sometimes find it more advantageous to use natural gas.

However, the natural gas that we use in the province of Quebec—I speak of Quebec because it is the region with which I am most familiar—is extremely expensive. I have been told that the owner of an average house, well built, well insulated, has spent, over a period of two years, between \$250 and \$300 to heat his house with propane gas. On the other hand, someone from Alberta recently told me that it was possible in that province to heat an ordinary home for something like \$75, \$80 or \$90 a year. That means a tremendous difference.

Of course, I understand that the transportation of natural gas from the west to the eastern provinces would considerably increase the cost of that gas, but I doubt that this could increase it to the point where it would cost something like \$300 to heat a home in our part of the country, whereas it only costs \$80 to \$90 in Alberta.

It may have slipped our minds that in the United States there are something like 315,000 miles of pipe line, of distribution lines, which supply about 20 per cent of all the heating fuel in the United States. This means that considered solely for heating purposes, gas is an extremely important asset. Consequently, I believe it is our duty to be careful, and very wary, when the question arises of passing legislation under which the eastern provinces may or may not benefit from this enormous wealth, which the western provinces are now enjoying.

I hope I would not be out of order in quoting a very brief excerpt from *Le Soleil*,

of Quebec, dated June 12, 1952. It is an editorial which approves categorically, emphatically, if I may use that word, the position taken in this house by the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Balcer) and the hon. member for Chicoutimi (Mr. Gagnon) on this very matter. At the end of the editorial, we find the following:

The government will undoubtedly step in before it is too late and expound clearly a national policy regarding the use of Alberta's gas, which is an essential source of energy to the industrial development of Canada at large.

In concluding, I again wish to assert clearly my position on this matter. I repeat that I have no intention of blocking or of killing this bill. On the contrary, I would like to see many members from the east express their views, so that we may know what they think of the problem we are now considering.

As far as I am concerned, I wanted to assert my position, because I think that we have here a vital problem, the solution of which could bear on the settlement of very difficult conditions.

I say once again that the western provinces are now developing immense natural resources and we from the east hope that these resources will be developed wisely. Without wishing to side with any government or political group, I am of the opinion that the province of Alberta is now privileged in having a sound administration and in enjoying a measure of very intelligent protection regarding the utilization of these immense natural resources. It seems to me, however, that we should not authorize any measure likely to deprive the east of these immense resources, and, on the same basis, it seems to me that the eastern provinces, which are also blessed with considerable natural resources, should, as far as possible, make these resources available to the western provinces before exporting them or authorizing our neighbours to make use of them to the prejudice of our people.

(Text):

Section stands.

Progress reported.

Mr. Speaker: It being nine o'clock, the house will resume its business which was interrupted at six o'clock.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

AUTHORIZATION TO MAKE CAPITAL EXPENDITURES
IN 1952

Hon. Alphonse Fournier (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the house go into