

*Alberta Natural Gas Company*

coast have been served. The Yellowhead pass is the most accessible pass in the Canadian Rockies. It is the pass used by the Canadian National Railways. On that route are beautiful Jasper Park, Mount Robson, Kamloops and populous Fraser valley. That route taps the great oil and gas fields of the Edmonton district. It is midway in central Alberta. It will be accessible and within reasonable distance from the potential gas and oil fields of the Peace river country. Any gas line that is built to the Pacific coast or southward will have to depend on a grid collection system, connecting all Alberta gas fields. This route has the advantage of connecting to this grid system about midway of the proven and potential gas-producing areas.

Evidence given by an expert representing one company seeking a charter last week was to the effect that a railway paralleling the gas line would contribute to cheaper construction cost, and also that a highway paralleling the gas line would greatly reduce costs. Evidence was also given that the pipe line must be served by an all-year highway of some kind, for construction as well as year-round maintenance.

The Yellowhead route has comparatively light snowfall and although a highway has not been built through that pass, there is a trail which has been used by automobiles which could be developed into a first-class highway cheaper than any other pass through mountains. The people of central and northern Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are very anxious to have an all-weather road to the Pacific coast. The construction of a gas line through this pass would of necessity require a highway which would serve the people of the prairie provinces and make possible a year-round highway for access to the Pacific coast.

I am very doubtful if year-round traffic will be possible over the other highway routes which are now contemplated through the mountains. Even though the cost of a pipe line through the Yellowhead pass should be proven higher than a pipe line on United States soil, we must weigh carefully the advantages of the all-Canadian route. One reason these advantages cannot be overlooked is the fact that, if and when the great cities of the United States northwest are served by Alberta gas, a highway paralleling a gas line from Canada will have a great attraction to tourists.

The Yellowhead route would bring United States tourists a long way into Canada. The further they come into Canada the more United States dollars they spend in Canada. I am convinced that a highway paralleling a gas line throughout the Yellowhead pass

[Mr. Prudham.]

would soon earn enough tourist revenue to offset any difference in original cost. The Yellowhead route has the additional tourist attraction of our string of national parks, which would then be accessible, Mount Robson, Jasper, Banff, Elk Island, Prince Albert national park and Riding Mountain national park in Manitoba.

The construction cost of the pipe line through this route should be less when accompanied by a highway. The cost of the construction of a highway should be less because of the construction of a pipe line. Both of these projects would be aided by the fact that the railway parallels the route. If the people of the Pacific coast really want Alberta gas before it is exported to the United States, I am surprised that they did not give these possibilities and advantages more consideration when locating the British Columbia section of the trans-Canada highway. Evidence produced shows that it would be rather difficult to serve Trail and certain towns in the southern interior of British Columbia by the Yellowhead route. My opinion is that, if and when the Alberta reserves of gas warrant extensive export to the United States, a return pipe-line loop should be built—possibly through United States territory—connecting with the southern end of the Alberta grid system.

This would be an insurance against interruption of service for all users, which would have a tendency to greatly increase the volume of sales. In the early days of gas service in Edmonton, when the city was depending on one line, the service was interrupted by breaks with disastrous results in cold weather which discouraged people from converting from coal to gas for many years, until duplicate lines were installed and confidence restored.

I know the argument will be used that connecting the southern loop of this system would cost money. I am sure that industries and domestic users would be willing to pay more for their gas to be adequately insured against interruptions of service.

If and when this becomes an accomplished fact, the people of Trail and southern British Columbia can be served by stub lines. The committee was told by certain witnesses that the city of Trail has a potential market for almost as much gas as Vancouver. However, the evidence was also given that if Trail is served by gas the gas will largely replace fuel oil. Alberta has a surplus of oil for which we must find markets. Why be in a hurry to destroy our markets for oil?

Mr. Chairman, many speakers argue that, although one company has already received