



Bulletin

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CHANGE IN NORTHERN CANADA

The following excerpts are from a recent address by Mr. Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to the Executive Conference of the American Gas Association:

...There can be little doubt that the frontier areas of North America hold great potential for the discovery of oil and gas. Off-shore, Alaska, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories mainland, the Arctic Islands and the frozen seas between show promise. More than promise, they have demonstrated their potential for the development and production of oil and gas.

Oil-seeps at what is now known as Norman Wells were first reported in 1789 by Alexander MacKenzie. The first well there was drilled in 1920-21. The first gas discovery in the area was made in 1940. In 1960, an oil and gas discovery was made in the central Yukon. This was followed in the early Sixties by a gas discovery in the Liard River area just north of 60. In 1967 the Pointed Mountain gas-field was found. Since Prudhoe Bay the pace has quickened.

Last year, two major gas discoveries were made in the Arctic Islands, both by Panarctic Oil - one on Melville Island and one on King Christian Island. Just a few days ago gas was located in the Mackenzie Delta.

Pointed Mountain, in the northwestern corner of the Northwest Territories most likely will be the first producing gas-field in the Canadian North. Most of you probably know that Westcoast Transmission currently has an application before the National Energy Board to build a 30-mile pipeline which would connect this field to their system in northeastern British Columbia by the end of 1972. If approved by the Board and built, this pipeline will be the first to bring northern gas to southern markets. The building of this line will also give us some idea of what pipeline construction will be like north of 60. This project, however, will be undertaken in an environment that isn't greatly different from the adjoining parts of British Columbia, where there have been pipelines in operation for some years.

There is little or no permafrost in that particular place. The bedrock is near the surface. The ecological system there recovers relatively rapidly from man's activities. It cannot be classified as a highly sensitive zone, but it has its own ecological system and we will be looking at ways in which the pipeline can be safely built.

RULES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Soon after I became Minister responsible for Northern Affairs in 1968, I took steps to ensure that the impact of development would be in harmony with northern needs and realities. The three-point conservation legislative program which resulted provides a northern framework for the Seventies and enables the Government to lay down specific guidelines for development projects such as the one being considered at Pointed Mountain.

The first of these steps was the introduction into Parliament of the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Bill, which is designed to protect the Canadian North from pollution at sea. This was followed by the Northern Inland Waters Bill, which makes the fresh-water resources of the North a public property

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