

Mr. CRERAR: I believe that is correct. In any event, Mr. McClave was at Waterways—

Mr. MacNICOL: I met him there.

Mr. CRERAR: —last year, I think. He writes:

In my last letter before leaving camp—

That is, Waterways.

—I gave you some news about the completion of the bunkhouse and the work on the new office building. Before leaving camp November 15, 1943, they had the foundation in for the new machine shop and garage, which is located between the warehouse and the laboratory. The location of the new separating plant is on the other side of the warehouse. I did not see Paul Schmidt before leaving camp, but knew of his caustic reactions about the new construction work.

I know about how much work had to be done this winter before the wheels began to turn, viz., the machine shop had to be finished, the separating plant completed and machinery installed. The boiler house building had not been started, engine and electric power units had to be installed. Then the many details of assembly of machinery and apparatus had to be in place before starting operations. With a mild open winter this work should be completed this spring.

As I indicated this afternoon, there were delays in getting the work pushed forward rapidly because of labour problems and priority problems regarding materials.

What I would like to get over to you is that this is an engineering job and has no relation or comparison to Fitzsimmons' make-shift plant.

That is the plant further down the river.

I know when this plant is completed, we can operate twenty-four hours per day, every day.

I would like the hon. member for Davenport to note that.

Mr. MacNICOL: Did he say, "in the year"?

Mr. CRERAR: No, he says "every day". I shall have a word to say about that in a moment. I want the hon. member for Davenport to note this, because I think that Mr. McClave is an engineer of standing.

Mr. MacNICOL: I know him very well.

Mr. CRERAR: Well, this is what he says: When the General Construction Company—

He means, the General Engineering company.

—took over the first of last October all we had was a junk pile and the jig-saw puzzle of putting this junk back into a working condition is no easy job.

Mr. MacNICOL: It is certainly a reflection on whoever ordered it torn down.

Mr. CRERAR: That was Mr. McClave's opinion about it.

[Mr. MacNicol.]

In regard to the new water line from the Athabaska river this was Mr. Nielsen's job and as he had been in the oil business and was familiar with oil pipelines, I thought he had the know how for installing a mile of six-inch water line and I did not pay any attention to the work. I believe the General Construction Company have outlined a practical plan for the development of a large pilot plant and this is no time to jump on them as they are not encumbered with a magic carpet or Aladdin's lamp to guide them in their work.

You ask, "What is the matter, anyway?" The construction and operation prior to the fire in November, 1941, and the redesigning after the fire was about the extreme limit of poor design for practical operation of a separating plant. In 1940 I prepared a complete working flow sheet of a separating plant. These drawings were never used. At first, Mr. Sage, construction engineer, said he had never received the drawings. Later, I found the flow sheet plans among his other drawings. Then he stated that my plan was impractical, and from that time on I was not responsible for what happened during the next two years.

But after all, I cannot blame Mr. Sage and Mr. Byrum, as they were oil men and never had any experience in ore dressing mills. Now the engineers in charge of reconstruction have had experience in designing and operating ore dressing plants, and this is what we should have had in the beginning of construction instead of refinery engineers who had never been in an ore dressing mill.

I mention this because I do not know anything personally about these matters; all I can do is to take the advice of men who should know, who are practical men.

Mr. GRAYDON: There is one over on this side.

Mr. CRERAR: I think it is not too much to say that the mistakes in designing both the plant subsequent to 1935 and the one that followed the fire lay in the fact that the designing was done largely by oil geologists and not by practical engineering people. That is why, when this arrangement was made and we were putting government money into the development of a testing plant, we wanted to get the very best technical assistance we could find, and I have no hesitation in saying that in my judgment the General Engineering company are unsurpassed in their knowledge and ability to do that kind of work.

My hon. friend made some criticism of the town site. I do not wish to add to what I said previously about that. You must provide the necessary staff—there is a considerable operating personnel in both the plant and the office work—at a place like McMurray with decent quarters in which to live. They may call it a town site or a city site or a village site. What was aimed at was the provision of accommodation which was designed and built to meet reasonable needs.

My hon. friend had a comment to make about wintertime production. I rather differ