

Alberta Natural Gas Company

secondhand facts through members of this house who were in favour of or opposed to these bills. I wanted the facts obtained from professional men who had the technical qualifications to be listened to with respect, with regard to both the supply of gas and the feasibility of a Canadian route. Almost everyone who has spoken in the house has given some sort of lip service to an all-Canadian route, the only question being whether or not such a route is economically feasible. I must say that having finally got these bills to this committee, I was extremely disappointed in its proceedings. I was not a member of the committee, but I would have liked to be. For part of the time I was busy on budget matters, but I did attend committee meetings as often as I could, as members who were there will recall. I also followed the proceedings of the committee in the press.

It was my hope that some accurate technical information would be obtained from people other than those putting forward their own case for acquisition of a charter. I was hoping especially that someone would have called the employee of this government who is the greatest expert on oil and gas in Canada, Dr. Hume of the geological survey branch. A year ago I attended a convention of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy in Vancouver, that is the professional body of the mining men and geologists in Canada. The second day of the convention was given over to a discussion of Alberta oil. All the geologists of the large oil companies and other experts were there, but Dr. Hume was chosen as the keynote speaker. In that gathering of men he was introduced as the man who knew most about gas and oil in Canada. It is a great pity that the committee did not have the benefit of Dr. Hume's opinions as they were expressed that day as to the tremendous amount of gas which was available, and other factors in connection with gas and oil development.

I was sorry, too, that the original pipeline company, the Westcoast Transmission Company, who at various times have alleged that an all-Canadian route is economically feasible, were not called back before that committee to refute the evidence of those two other companies who put forward their plea. According to the two companies the all-Canadian route, while perhaps physically possible, was not economically practical. There are two or three quite obvious reasons why we should not perhaps worry about the arguments put forward by these other two companies to show that such a route is impractical. To begin with the engineering point of view, a railroad, a road, and a pipe line are difficult to build in that order. A railroad, of course, with its gradual curves

and grades, is a most difficult engineering feat. A road, with its sharper curves and sharper grades, is less difficult, and a pipe line can be built almost anywhere, since the grades and curves are not of the same importance and little right of way is needed.

Across British Columbia, which has been described again and again as a wilderness of mountains, we have today three transcontinental rail lines, and two main road systems. No insurmountable difficulty has been found in building those, and it is a much more difficult engineering feat to take them through these mountains than a pipe line.

Then, this question of cost was raised by Mr. Dixon. He said that the Canadian route along southern British Columbia through the Crowsnest pass was feasible from the engineering point of view, but it would cost \$17 million more. He just picked that figure out of the air, and there was no substantiation given for it. He tried to leave the impression that the mountains of British Columbia suddenly stop at the international boundary, and that Washington is one great plain south of the boundary across which construction would be easy. He actually used that expression, "crossing the great plain of central Washington". Hon. members have crossed Washington in their cars, and know that there is no great plain in the centre of Washington. The same mountain ranges that traverse British Columbia also cut across Washington. As a matter of fact, two out of the three passes in Washington are higher than the passes on the Canadian side.

Then this man went on to say that this \$17 million would result in an extra cost of about a million dollars a year to the consumer in Vancouver. I also heard him give evidence to the effect that Vancouver would take only one-sixth of the gas. An extra million for one-sixth means an extra six million to be paid to finance an extra capital investment of \$17 million. These figures make it easy to understand their eagerness to get into this pipe line business, when you can get an annual return of \$6 million on a capital investment of \$17 million.

I must confess that throughout this pipe line debate, right from the time it entered the house first, my greatest disappointment has been the attitude of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways. My colleague the member for Comox-Alberni mentioned this a year ago when he voted against a pipe line bill. These two companies, after all, are the backbone of the transportation industry in Canada. They are in rail transportation, in air transportation, in deep sea and coastal shipping, and today they are even in the truck and bus transportation business. The