

GATEWAYS TO NEW HORIZONS

Central B.C. Hub City Takes Long-Range View

Prince George, British Columbia—the “hub” of the province, equidistant from two main seaports and centre of major highways and railways—is slowly turning its back on a fabulous post-war boom.

For having experienced a crippling three-month strike in its \$25,000,000-a-year lumber industry, the city is looking to natural gas, cheap power, and tourism to help stabilize its booming post-war growth.

More than 700 lumbering operations in the Prince George district, which blossomed as a result of lucrative American interests in the last 10 years, have zoomed a comfortable 3,000 population into a housing-short 10,000. Businesses likewise mushroomed. New homes replaced empty and unkempt lots until all available were taken up. Within the last few months, city council had to extend the boundaries of its municipality to include an additional 3,000 persons who had settled around its original perimeter.

Then came the blow. Although the strike has been settled since early in 1954 and business has resumed its normal pace, it is estimated it will take five years to recover the loss of some \$3,000,000 in wages and markets. But those in Prince George who take a long range view, say that perhaps a good deal can be learned from the strike. “Sure it hurt,” says Al Bowie, local merchant, and president

of the Prince George Board of Trade. “But it has sobered us up to a more rational way of thinking.”

“For the first time, Prince George is actively trying to locate other industry here. The Board of Trade has formed several committees to investigate all industrial potentials, and city council is also preparing promotional data.”

Promote Cheap Electric Power

Their main concern is the city's lack of electric power and Mayor Gordon D. Bryant has pledged himself to correct the situation “if it's the last thing I do.” “Our present need has far outgrown our supply, not counting the additional amount we could use if it were available cheaply and abundantly,” said the mayor. Present capacity of the diesel-operated power plant is 4,500 horsepower. Energy demand is estimated at 10,000-h.p. The plant is operated by the city but Mayor Bryant has asked the

B.C. Power Commission, provincial power suppliers, to take over.

“Naturally, we should like to see a hydro project developed in central B.C. There may be such a possibility.”

As a result, possibility of utilizing either the Clearwater hydro potential of more than 100,000 horsepower, and that of the Nation River of 80,000 horsepower is being studied.

The Clearwater, however, is some 200 air miles southeast of the “hub” city, and the Nation, about 150 miles northwest.

Natural Gas Line Brightens Future

Strong possibility of natural gas from the Peace River area 200 miles north reaching Prince George, figures largely in the Hub's future. Westcoast Transmission is only awaiting approval of the United States to begin construction on a \$90,000,000 pipeline from Fort St. John into southern B.C. and across the border. Route of the line would pass through Prince George.

cards today for industry,” says Mayor Bryant.

Potentials for large-scale pulp and plastic manufacturing industries using the combination of natural gas and the vast resources of pulp timber surrounding Prince George are cited by the Board of Trade.

The board also points to Prince George as the major distributing centre for northern and central B.C. The city is the approximate centre of the province, with three major highways passing through it, and is the terminal of two railways.

Centre of Transportation Lanes

Prince George also has a Grade A airport with facilities to handle all types of planes. Daily airline service is maintained by Canadian Pacific Airlines to Vancouver, Edmonton, Smithers, Whitehorse, Fort St. John, and many other centres along these routes.

by the new, year-round, first-class Hart Highway.

“The Hart Highway already has greatly increased our tourist traffic,” says Mr. Bowie, Board of Trade president. “We are looking forward to a bumper crop of visitors this year.”

Nine new auto camps and tourist lodges have been built since the highway was opened in the spring of 1953.

Daily rail service is given by the Canadian National Railways between Prince George and seaports of Prince Rupert and Vancouver, and to Edmonton, and by the Pacific Great Eastern to Vancouver over another route. Highways connect the Hub with Prince Rupert, 480 miles due west; with Vancouver, 480 miles south, and with Dawson Creek and the Alaska Highway

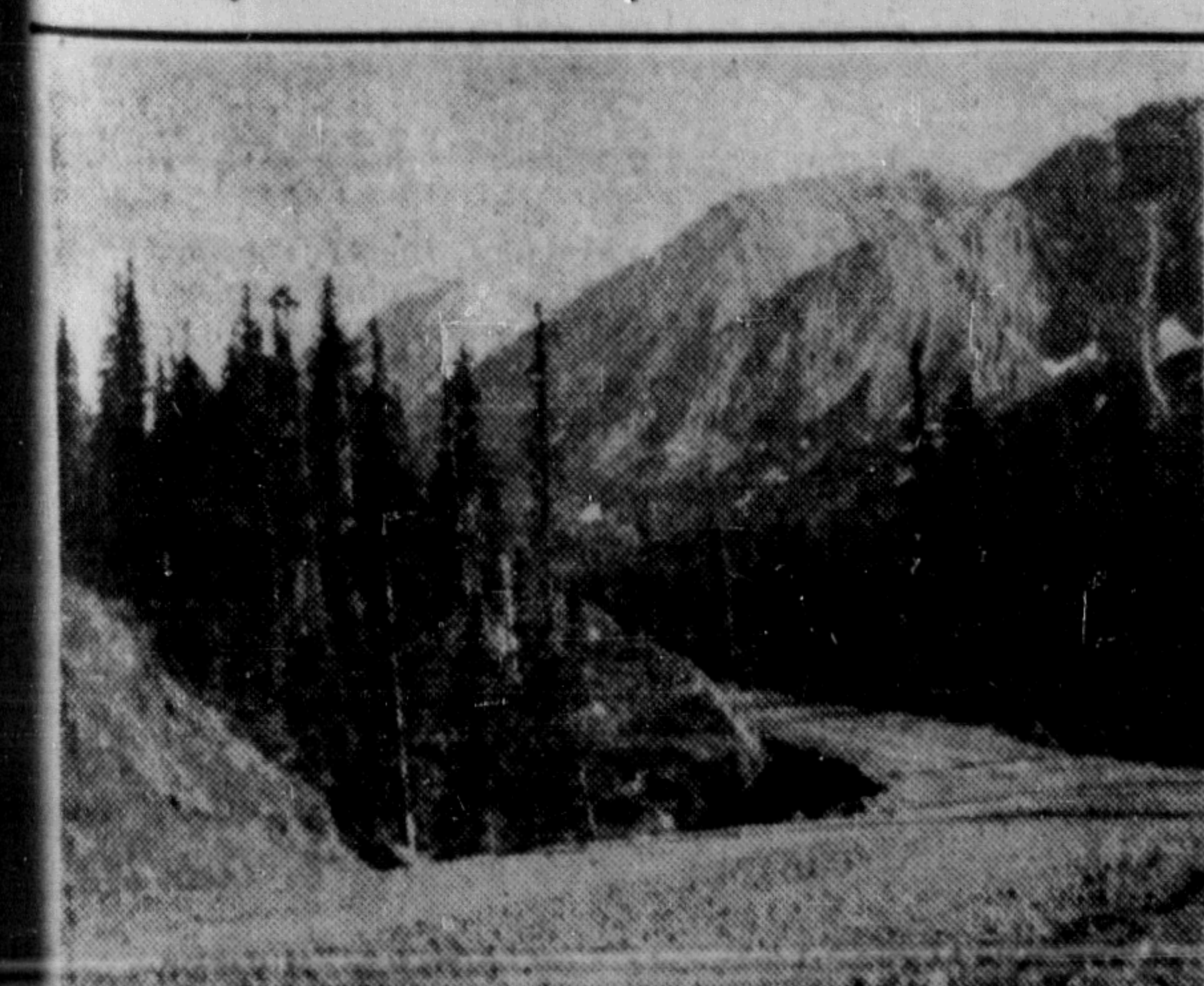
ANCHORAGE (AP) — The army engineers' Alaska district has announced an apparent low bid of \$4,196,083 for constructing eight three-story buildings at Ladd air force base. The bid was by Grove, Shepherd, Wilson and Kruger of Seattle. Twelve bids were submitted. The government estimate was \$4,473,426.

CANADIAN BANK HEAD WITNESS BEFORE MPs

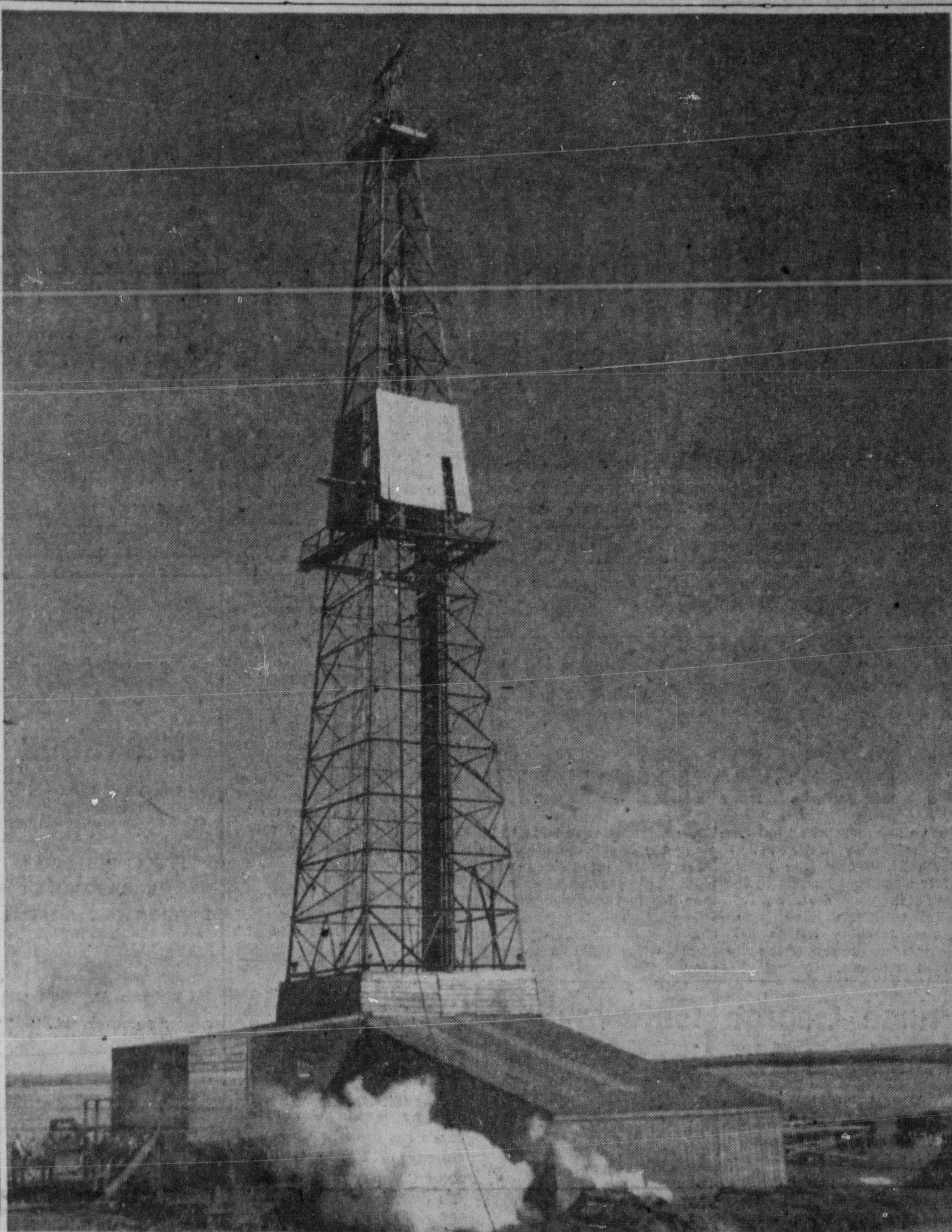
OTTAWA (CP)—Graham Towers, governor of the Bank of Canada, said here that final responsibility for any monetary expansion in Canada must rest with the government.

That was his reply to a proposal by J. M. Macdonnell, Progressive Conservative financial critic, that Parliament should have some check on the central bank's power to increase the money supply.

Mr. Towers, appearing as a witness before the Commons banking committee, had no opinion on whether Parliament should try to control such expansion.



HART HIGHWAY, winding 265 miles from Prince George to Dawson Creek through a maze of spectacular scenery, passes alongside the Murray Mountain Range to the right at Mile 148.



OIL DERRICKS like these are a common sight today on the wheatfields or wilderness tracts of British Columbia's Peace River area. Since the first oil and natural gas wells “came in” four years ago in the Fort St. John area, millions have been spent on

exploration annually. While several oil reserves have been located, the emphasis is on natural gas, reserves of which total more than three-trillion cubic feet to date.

Natural Gas From Peace River May Launch Major Industrial Age

Eager eyes of industry today are glued on the rapidly expanding natural gas reserves of British Columbia's Peace River area, expected to launch this province on its greatest economic and industrial era in history.

But while \$1,000,000 a month is spent in the quest for gas and oil in the Peace and one well brought in for two drilled, the spark that will set off the fabulous potential empire still needs to be struck.

It is the “go-ahead” signal West Coast Transmission Co. Ltd. needs from the United States Federal Power Commission to export natural gas to the U.S. Without such a permit, says the company, it could not bear the initial cost of \$90,000,000 line from Dawson Creek to Vancouver.

But all indications are for a favorable decision by FPC, with oil exploration firms, other industrialists, and B.C. government officials betting high on an early U.S. concession.

Although construction of the pipeline is a big project, it is minor compared to its far-flung effect on B.C.'s economy. W. A. C. Bennett, premier of the province, has this to say: “The development which would originate from this project will be greater than anything since the war.”

NORTH WILL GROW But besides providing cheap fuel and power for industry wherever the pipeline goes, Peace River natural gas and its development will have a tremendous stimulating effect on growth of such northern B.C. centres as Prince George, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, and even Fort Nelson.

Dawson Creek has been using natural gas domestically and commercially for over a year, first centre in B.C. to do so. But its gas is piped in from nearby Alberta wells.

Dawson Creek electricity is generated by natural gas and other towns in the vicinity expect the same set-up soon. Greatest benefit to these com-

munities, however, will come from the millions to be spent in future development work and secondary industries.

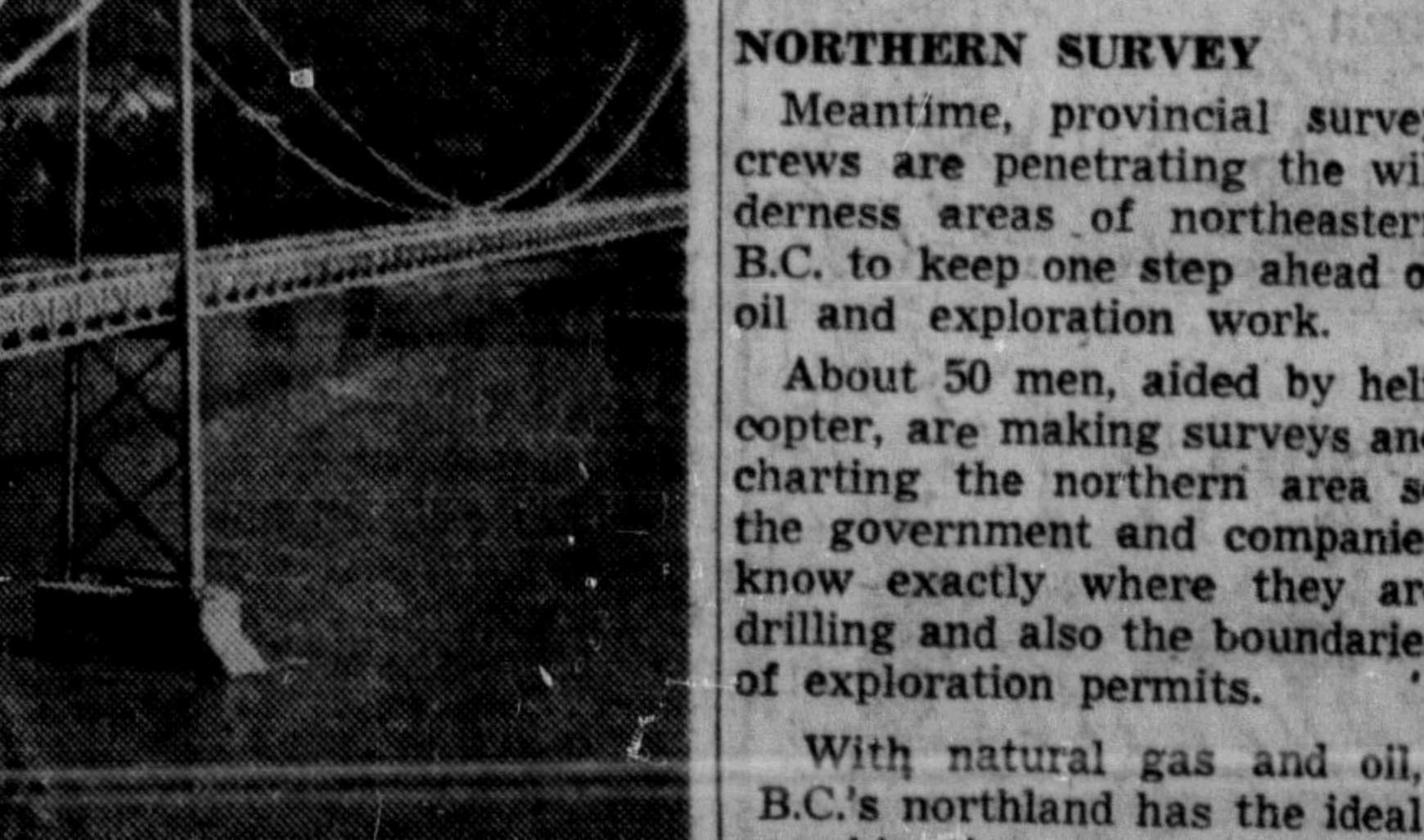
Dawson Creek itself looks forward to becoming a city of 20,000 in the near future. Fort St. John knows it is facing an expansion boom. And Prince George, 265 miles to the south and gateway to the Peace River area, places most of its future hopes on the coming of natural gas.

Route of the proposed pipeline would pass through that central B.C. city.

44 GAS WELLS To date, a total of 31,052,747 acres of land in B.C.—most of it in the Peace River and Fort Nelson area—is under petroleum or natural gas holdings, with several drilling permits pending.

Up to May this year, 44 wells were completed as potential gas wells in the Peace, 10 were drilling, and several were in stages of preparation.

Pacific Petroleum, which holds a major interest in West Coast Transmission, has led exploration of all firms in the



PEACE RIVER BRIDGE which spans the mighty drainage system of the area which bears the river's name. The bridge forms a vital part of the Alaska Highway, connecting Fort St. John and Dawson Creek.

New Railway Extension Sparks Peace River Area

Extensions of a new Canadian empire in the north—catapulted by the wartime construction of the mighty Alaska Highway—is to get another shot in the arm in the near future.

The B.C. government recently announced it will start construction soon of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway extension from Prince George to Dawson Creek, providing for B.C.'s great Peace River area its first Pacific rail outlet.

But while future development of the Peace is considered “staggering,” the recent past depicts a transformation almost as fabulous.

Dawson Creek, today the biggest town in the Peace River area of B.C. and Alberta, is the beginning—“Mile-O”—of the fabulous, 1,529-mile link with Fairbanks, Alaska.

The village of more than 6,000 also is the terminal of the Northern Alberta Railway and a highway to Edmonton; a highway to Yellowknife, N.W.T.; and recently the Hart Highway from Prince George was completed to bridge a 265-mile gap needed to provide the first overland contact with the rest of B.C.

And this year, the B.C. government announced it will soon start construction of a railroad from Prince George to Dawson Creek, an extension of its Pacific Great Eastern.

Growth to its present status from a population of less than 100 in 20 years, indicates the prosperity and progressiveness of Dawson Creek and its district.

In 1930, the present townsites some 500 miles northwest of Edmonton, was an outfield. The railroad arrived the next year and in 1934 the village was incorporated with a population of 400.

Twelve years later, with the world torn by a war of de-

struction, a high-ranking U.S. army officer coolly announced in Dawson Creek that work would begin soon on a highway to Alaska, for the continent was in danger of invasion from the north, and a supply line was of prime importance.

Mighty Road Built in One Year

The \$135,000,000 road, described as a crowning engineering achievement, was started in March, 1942, and completely finished a year later.

During its construction, population at Dawson Creek swelled to 15,000. After the end of the Second World War, the village was left not only with an all-weather overland highway to the far north, but with a water and sewer system, warehouses and other buildings, and numerous new streets built by the American army.

But the army of men and equipment also withdrew, leaving the village with a ghost-like atmosphere, yet not for long.

Since Alexander Mackenzie, first white man to see the Peace River, established a fur trading post near Fort St. John in 1792, its surrounding area was expounded as one of the greatest agricultural vistas of Canada. Men who headed overland through the Peace River area on their way to the Klondike in 1898, returned with glowing accounts of vast farming country.

First wave of settlers came from Alberta over the 400-mile Edson trail in 1913, followed by veterans of the First Great War in 1918-19 under the Soldier Settlement Plan.

First Railroad Reaches Dawson

In 1931 the railroad reached the B.C. Peace River section, providing its first public communication with the rest of Canada and starting its heaviest settlement until the end of the Second World War.

Again, veterans played a major role in expansion of the Peace, accompanied by farmers from every part of Canada and from several European countries.

Today there are about 1,200,000 acres of land occupied, 400,000 under cultivation. But there are still 2,300,000 acres not settled, with another half million acres available in the Fort Nelson area, 300 miles northward.

But while agriculture is the country's backbone, most of its publicity has come to the rest of the continent because of recent gas and oil discoveries.

Natural Gas Line Waits Decision

Since the first major gas discoveries in the Fort St. John area in 1951, reserves proved to date total more than three trillion cubic feet. Exploration is continuing at an unprecedented rate but producing wells are capped until the U.S. Federal Power Commission's decision on a gas line to supply the Pacific area is handed down.

Major industrial development of the whole of B.C. is seen stemming from construction of such a natural gas line for which Westcoast Transmission already has received Canadian approval.

Another imminent major project which will hoist Dawson Creek and the whole Peace area is the extension of the B.C. government-owned PGE Railway from Prince George northward.

Work on the extension is to begin next year, and when completed, will give the Peace River area a direct outlet to two major Pacific ports, Prince Rupert and Vancouver.

The railroad—depending on what route is selected—could also tap vast coal resources located along the Peace River. Three active mines are now in

operation west of Hudson Hope. B.C.'s Peace River Block—turned over to the Dominion government in 1883—no longer is a forgotten territory. To the contrary, it is the “hope-chest” on which the province stakes much of its future; a golden empire, causing Robert Bonner, B.C.'s attorney-general, to say: “We have opportunities of development there comparable to Texas.”

13 Communities In P-G District

The Prince George area comprises School District No. 57, with an approximate area of 13,122 square miles, including Prince George city and the 13 communities of Crescent Spur, Dewey, Fort McLeod, Giscome, Hansard, Longworth, Nukko Lake, Red Rock, Shelley, Sinclair Mills, South Fort George, Summit Lake and Woodpecker. The discovery of gold in the Cariboo brought the first settlers. In 1914 Prince George was linked with eastern Canada by rail.



ALASKA HIGHWAY is maintained as a year-round travel artery throughout its 1,500-mile length from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks by units of the Canadian Army. This sign is located at Mile 1 of the highway, just out of Dawson Creek.