

# HALTON HILLS & AREA PARADE OF HOMES

## Much At Stake With Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

The magnitude of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline development is unprecedented in terms of capital cost, significance to energy security and impact on Canada's last frontier.

Of immediate concern is whether a natural gas pipeline should be built from the Mackenzie Delta and, if so, who builds it. The decision facing the federal government also involves the future of a great river valley and its native people.

As envisaged by federal policy, a gas pipeline is the first development of a Mackenzie Valley transportation corridor, eventually to include an oil pipeline, a railroad, hydroelectric lines and tele-communications facilities.

The corridor's future is entirely contingent on the gas pipeline. The oil industry has made it clear that there will be intensified oil and gas activity in the Western Arctic only if it is built.

"It is not only the interest of the South in obtaining energy from the frontier that is to be considered," says Mr. Justice Thomas Berger, commissioner of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry.

"So let's do it right and let's not be stampeded into making a hasty and ill-informed judgment on a matter of great importance to the North and to our country."

### CLIMATE FAVORABLE

The Mackenzie River carries warm waters from the south, softening the harsh Arctic environment to make the Mackenzie Valley a relatively habitable area.

Two groups are competing for the right to build a pipeline. Canadian Arctic Gas Pipeline Ltd. of Toronto, a consortium of 16 United States and Canadian companies, and Foothills Pipe Lines Ltd. of Calgary.

Arctic Gas is proposing a 2,500-mile, 48-inch-diameter pipeline to move gas from Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope of Alaska and the Mackenzie Delta to U.S. and Canadian markets.

About 24 trillion cubic feet and seven trillion cubic feet of natural gas has been found in Prudhoe Bay and the Mackenzie Delta, respectively.

Most of the delta's remaining gas potential has not yet been confirmed.

The Arctic Gas project would cost an estimated \$10 billion, with more than \$7 billion earmarked for the Canadian portion.

Mr. Justice Berger describes it as "the greatest project, in terms of capital expenditure, ever undertaken by private enterprise anywhere."

### PROJECT ALL-CANADIAN

Foothills is owned 80 per cent by Alberta Gas Trunk Line Co. Ltd. of Calgary and 20 per cent by Westcoast Transmission Co. Ltd. of Vancouver, the main gas-transmission companies in Alberta and British Columbia.

The \$4.5-billion Foothills proposal is for an all-Canadian line using smaller, 42-inch pipe to move delta gas to Canadian markets only. Arctic Gas has another rival.

El Paso Natural Gas Co. of Houston, Tex., is proposing a \$7-billion, all-American project to pipe North Slope gas to the ice-free port of Valdez on the south coast of Alaska, where it would be liquefied and shipped by tanker to California.

The presence of oil in the Mackenzie Valley has been known since 1789 when Alexander Mackenzie journeyed to the Arctic Ocean on the river named after him and saw oil oozing from the ground.

As early as 1888, the Geological Survey of Canada put the Mackenzie Valley's energy supply into perspective.

"Its remoteness from the present centres of population... will probably delay its development for some years to come, but this is only a question of time."

### STARTED IN 1973

Drilling in the Beaufort Sea started in 1973 when Imperial Oil Ltd. built the first of many man-made islands.

Most of the remaining oil and gas potential in the Mackenzie Basin lies under the Beaufort Sea.

A consortium to study the feasibility of an oil pipeline from the delta, the Calgary-based Beaufort-Delta Oil Project Ltd., has five members: Imperial, Shell Canada Ltd., Gulf Oil Canada Ltd., Interprovincial Pipeline Ltd. and Trans Mountain Pipe Line Co. Ltd.

Canadian Marine Drilling Ltd. (Cammar), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Dume Petroleum Ltd. of Calgary, has applied for permission

for offshore drilling in the Beaufort Sea. Cammar was given approval in principle by the cabinet in 1973 on the condition that final drilling authority would not be issued before the summer of 1976 and until the findings of the Beaufort Sea project have been assessed.

### BLOWOUT POSSIBLE

The project, completed last year, was an 18-month, \$12-million environmental study of the risks involved in Beaufort Sea offshore drilling.

One of the project's study reports said the worst that might happen would be an underwater oil-well blowout.

Such a blowout, although unlikely, would take at least one year to bring under control. None of the damage would be irreversible but recovery to the ecology, in some cases, might take as long as 10 years.

Chief Justice Berger was appointed in March, 1974 to head the inquiry to examine the social, economic and environmental impact of the Mackenzie Valley development.

The inquiry is expected to end in September and Mr. Justice Berger said he hopes to submit his recommendations to the federal cabinet by the end of this year.

There has been criticism that the inquiry is moving too slowly, but Mr. Justice Berger says:

"If Canada can't take the time to make an informed decision about what's going to happen in our northland, then what has Canada got time for?"

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