Mr. E. C. Manning
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LS: I'd like to cover some issues from 1958 and then look at 1959 as well today. But before going into specific issues from 1958 I'd like to have a short discussion on Mr. Bennett who was Premier of B.C. in this period of time. You were both heads of Social Credit Governments, but for instance, in talking with Preston, I understand that there were differences in interpretation of Social Credit and application, in style of leadership, and I would like in general your comments on that.

ECM: There was a difference in the philosophical position. If you're familiar with how the Social Credit Government was elected in B.C., Mr. Bennett at one time had sat as a Conservative member in the B.C. House, then split with them and sat as an Independent. The Social Credit Movement in B.C. had been active for quite a number of years but had not been very successful in arousing a lot of public support, to a large degree, I think, because they had not had any particular leadership - no outstanding person at the head of it.

When Mr. Bennett, who as I say was sitting as an Independent Member in the B.C. Legislature, took on the leadership of the Social Credit Party in B.C., he revitalized it very quickly, and was successful. I believe the first time around they had an even break on members in the House, but that upsurge was due primarily to his leadership. He was a dynamic type of individual, a great public relations man. He loved public meetings and controversy and this type of thing, and he aroused a great deal of public interest and attention.

LS: When you say he revitalized the Social Credit Party, could you be more specific?

ECM: It has gone through a period where they'd put on a campaign in an election and they'd pick up quite a number of votes, but they never real broke through as far as being a force in the Legislature. I think they had a few members elected from time to time, but they were not a force. And then of

course, after that type of election result the thing would die down again and be pretty well dormant until another election approached, and then they'd take another stab at it.

When he came into the arena as the leader of Social Credit, he set out to organize the entire Province and to drum up public interest. So when the election came around they were in a position to really be effective.

I think it would be fair to say that while Mr. Bennett embraced the Social Credit vehicle in British Columbia and became its head (and headed it for many years), he had not taken any part, or as far as I know any particular interest, in the background of the Social Credit Movement in Western Canada as far as the educational work was concerned. He put no emphasis at all on Social Credit monetary philosophy. I don't think it would be inaccurate to say that to Mr. Bennett, Social Credit and free enterprise were synonymous. That was his emphasis. I cannot recall him having anything significant ever to say about the monetary philosophies of Social Credit.

So there was that fundamental difference between the philosophical background in Alberta and British Colombia, because in Alberta the Social Credit Movement had been built on monetary reform, and the emphasis had been on the monetary philosophy of Social Credit. Whereas in British Columbia the emphasis, right from the outset of Mr. Bennett's identification with it, was free enterprise - that was synonymous with Social Credit.

Mr. Bennett and I were friends. I had not known him until he took the leadership. And we were good friends over all the years that we were both in government. We were not close in our government associations; we had relatively few meetings and relatively few occasions where there were issues on which we attempted to act jointly. In fact at times I can recall at Federal/Provincial conferences, our position as a province and the B.C. position would be significantly different. We were not united in that respect.

Just to give you an illustration. With all the emphasis on free enterprise, which was the whole thrust of his attack in British Columbia and inseparably identified in his speeches and programs with free enterprise, then they took over the B.C. Electric! That to us was inconsistent. It didn't jibe. I just mention that as the type of thing where we would find ourselves in different positions. We would not support that philosophy. For reasons of that kind, while we never had any disagreements, we were not working as a close liaison team.

LS: Do you recall an agreement that the B.C. Government had with a Swedish financier called Wener Grinn(sp?), about development of Northern B.C.? I think it had to do with electricity and its effect on Alberta.

ECM: It's rather vague. I remember there was a lot of newspaper publicity about it at the time. Wener Grinn was an industrialist, a very wealthy Swedish industrialist. He entered into some form of agreement - and I don't know whether it was ever actually finalized, but there was a lot of political flack about it in B.C. - for a large scale development of resources, particularly in Northern British Columbia. The accusation of course, of the Opposition in British Columbia, was that the B.C. Government had sold out the B.C. resources to this foreign capitalist.

The deal fell through. I don't what the terms of the agreement were; I don't even know what it broke down on. But he was sort of a mystery man, this Wener Grinn. He was known on a world scale. One of the things (and this is rather vague because we're going a long way back), I remember him coming into some prominence: He owned a huge sea-going yacht and it rescued a passenger liner that I think was torpedoed during the war. Wener Grinn's yacht happened to come along and rescue a lot of these people; I think the ship was the Southern Cross. But that attracted quite a bit of publicity, which I think Wener Grinn did not want - he was rather a recluse.

I was not knowledgeable on the terms of their deal, but it was for resource development. He was a fabulously wealthy financier, and he was going to put up the capital.

LS: Did he ever approach Alberta?

ECM: He never approached the Government. I don't know whether he talked to any private interests in Alberta or not.

LS: Would whatever he was proposing have affected Alberta?

ECM: I can't think of any effect it would have on Alberta unless it might be some hydro development on the B.C. side of the border that would affect the rivers in Alberta, something of that kind. There was no relationship as far as any business activity extending over the boundary into Alberta. It was entirely with the B.C. Government.

LS: Just a final question about Mr. Bennett, in terms of political leadership style. How would you see the differences or similarities between you.

ECM: Well, it's hard for me to make an objective analysis if I'm involved in it. Mr. Bennett was, as I say, a bubbling, effervescent, dynamic personality. He loved argument; he loved debate.

For example, one very obvious difference in public presentations on his part and mine: Mr. Bennett felt he was cheated in a public meeting if he didn't stir up a lot of contentious questions and argument with the audience, and an occasional fight helped out if you could get that also! He'd even plant people in the audience to start if off, if necessary. He loved that type of thing.

That was not my approach at all to an audience. Rightly or wrongly, my own assessment of the effectiveness of the talk was how few questions there were. If you've covered the subject properly, they knew what you were talking about. If they had to start all over again and ask you a lot of stuff about it, I felt I hadn't done a very good job in conveying the information I wanted to convey. That maybe illustrates the difference in type. And it was noticeable. I would go out to scores of public meetings, and we threw our meetings open for questions as a rule; but rarely did people ask questions. But for Mr. Bennett, an hour's question period with

a few fights thrown in was the highlight of the show. It was a different style.

LS: Preston also mentioned that at one point you went to one of the Grey Cup games (you talked about that) and Mr. Bennett had a chauffeur and greeted you in fine style. Preston seemed to think that that was something that you didn't feel entirely comfortable with. Was your style different on that level too?

ECM: Well, I suppose. I recall the occasion; it was very nice, but I guess my reaction was that it was just totally unnecessary. After all, I was going to a Grey Cup game along with several thousand other people from Alberta. There was no need for that kind of royal treatment. It was very nice. He was very courteous, very gracious to do that. But he would lean more to that type of thing, more public flamboyance.

LS: What about his son. Is he a Social Crediter?

ECM: Well, strange as it may sound, I know very little about Bill Bennett. I had met him as a young lad, when his father was there years ago. But I have really never had a private conversation with Bill Bennett. I've met him to shake hands with him at meetings since he's been Premier a time or two, but I really have no personal knowledge of Bill Bennett at all.

LS: What about as a Social Credit Government, the only one in the country right now? What are your comments about the kind of policies, vis-a-vis Social Credit?

ECM: There again, I don't think it's unfair to say, the B.C. Government was a Social Credit Government in name. But Mr. Bennett senior, as I've already said, gave no weight to political philosophy, other than being a rabid free enterpriser. He was a very humanitarian individual, anxious to meet the needs of people. And I think that Bill Bennett, the present Premier, followed from that same background.

To my view - and I say this only from a very general knowledge of the situation because as I say, I don't know the people of the B.C. Government anymore - when the Social Credit Government was reelected in B.C., Mr. Bennett really had a pretty motley throng around him. The NDP had been in for a term; they'd antagonized a lot of people; they'd seriously impaired the economy of B.C. with their anti-business stance and radical socialism. And the people who had elected them, who had become sort of weary and fed up with the Social Credit Government (because they'd been there for a long time, primarily, I think) became pretty upset, some of them. They saw what it was doing to the mining industry and the lumber industry, and these are things which are vital to B.C.'s economy.

So there developed in B.C. a great upsurge to get rid of the socialist government. And really the party that Mr. Bennett, Senior, put together and led through that election was a very motley crowd who had one thing in common: they wanted to throw out Barrett and the NDP. They were not people who were knit together by a common political philosophy, certainly not a Social Credit philosophy. There wouldn't be but a handful of them would have the vaguest idea of the background of Social Credit as we knew it in this Province.

I think that created a difficult situation for Mr. Bennett. When you have a party which is made up of a substantial number of people who do not share any strong mutual philosophical convictions on monetary reform or economics or social policy but who are knit together really on a negative premise (throwing out that government that the people didn't like)... but I think Mr. Bennett has had quite a difficult time in keeping a cohesive government together because there was not that natural affinity between the Members that you'd normally find in a well-established political party that has certain things it stands for, and the people join it because they support those things. So I think he has had a difficult time for that reason.

LS: That raises a larger question about political leaders. Where does someone like that go for guidance or direction? If you don't have a backdrop of a political philosophy that you're working under, how are you a political leader?

ECM: Well, it becomes primarily a matter of individual judgment. And of course this is not in any way at variance with what has become almost commonplace in political parties in the last number of years. More and more political parties have been guided by the whims and positions of the individual who led them. You take the Liberal Party nationally, the Trudeau Government. As far as the old traditional Liberal position, you'd hunt all over to find it. It's Trudeau-ism - his philosophy, his concept of Canada, his concept of social justice, and all this kind of thing. So more and more, parties have become reflections of the particular philosophy of the leader, rather than parties which set out a number of fundamental principles and attracted or sought a leader who subscribed to those principles. In the case of the Liberals (and I don't think this is unfair to say at all), the Liberal Party nationally has to subscribe to Trudeau, not Trudeau to the Liberal Party. It's a Trudeau Party. It was a Diefenbaker Party when he was the Conservative leader. Leaders that were strong individuals from a personality standpoint, or insistent on their position being accepted, rather than the traditional adherence to a set of party principles.

LS: Is there an element of opportunism in all that?

ECM: It lends itself to opportunism. If an individual wants to be king, well of course that's much easier in a political structure where the rank and file and the public do not expect them to adhere to a set of principles.

Modern methods of communication, especially television, have contributed a lot to this. More and more, elections have become personality contests between individuals, rather than contests between two or three parties who had fundamentally different philosophies of life and government and who campaigned and ran their elections on the basis of those philosophies. Today they run it on the charisma of the leader, and which leader looks best on television. He's the fellow that's probably going to win. He may be dumb as an oyster, but if he comes through well on T.V., he has it made. I think it's rather serious because a political election should not be a popularity contest of individuals as far as the preservation of democracy is concerned and the public good is concerned, but that's the way it's been.

LS: In light of that discussion, I have a quote here that comes out of 1959 actually that was attributed to Percy Paige. This is the quote out of the Journal of February 28th of that year. "Percy Paige, PC Edmonton, described Mr. Manning as 'one of the cleverest provincial premiers in Canada' and said that without him the Social Credit Party would be out of power 'tomorrow'. He said Social Credit was 'a one-man party'."

ECM: Well, Mr. Paige was a very gracious man. No, I had that criticism; he was only voicing what others, and the media, said. All I can say on it (and really these are not things which I would even argue with the public myself because you never convince people on things of this kind) is that because a party subscribes to a basic set of guidelines or principles, that doesn't mean that it cannot have strong individuals in it, either as leader or in various places in it. The fundamental difference, to my mind, is not whether a particular leader or somebody associated with a party is strong or isn't strong, but as a party, and on the part of the leader, are the guiding principles this set of guidelines which the party represents?

In the case of the Social Credit Movement, it was founded on a set of fundamental convictions with respect to free enterprise, monetary reform, the respect of the dignity of the individual, affording opportunities to individuals. And whether the leader was weak or strong, that was what guided its direction. Now, if it had a strong leader who subscribed to those principles, because the leader is concrete and the principles are abstract, the public are going to look at the leader and say, "It's his party."

I don't know whether I make my point clear enough, but you can have a strong leader of a party without principles, and the public will say, "It's his party," because they look at something they can see - they can see and hear the leader. They don't look at the principles. You can have a party that is guided completely by a set of principles. If its leader is weak, the public emphasis and attention tends to shift more to what the party stands for. If the leader's strong, it shifts to the leader. But this still doesn't alter the fact that in one case the party may be guided by a

set of principles through a strong leader and in another case it may be guided by a strong leader without any principles.

LS: In the specifics of what Mr. Paige said, though, in terms of one-man Party, what are your feelings about that?

ECM: That was his assessment. I had been in the Party a long time. I was the mouthpiece of the Party as the leader. Even before I was in government I had been associated with public communication; I'd been through all the old years of the education work that built the Social Credit Movement up, and I communicated as best I could to the public constantly. The last three or four years I was in the government we put on a weekly television program called Telefacts, on most of the television stations in Alberta. And this was a means of communicating to them what the government was doing, inviting their feedback, and all this. When you do that, you're in their homes, you're in the paper, you're in front of them every day. Of course they think it's your party. I had no ambition for it to be called my party, but I was realistic enough to know that you can't be the mouthpiece for a party, especially if you're reaching a very substantial number of the population of the Province by these various means that we were using. Of course they're going to say it's your Party. As long as they kept on voting the right way, I wasn't going to quarrel with it!

LS: I can see that!

One final question. What I'm trying to get at here is a sense of your personal popularity in terms of the party. Even though it had principles which you continued to work under, the impact of your personality and your personal leadership - your feelings about that.

ECM: I don't know how you describe feelings about things like that. I would like to think, and I think I have some reason to feel that this was the case, that the very large measure of public support that I did enjoy from the people of Alberta for many, many years, came primarily from two or three things. One, I hope it came from their belief that we were sincerely trying to do the level best we could to give them the best government we

could. Two, I hope that it came from a confidence in us that had developed - that in a sense is related to the first one, that they had confidence that we would do our best, confidence we'd be honest, confidence that we wouldn't mislead them. I hope that was the reason that they gave us support. We tried to deserve that kind of confidence.

I think I had a degree of public support because I was known by the public as having some very firm spiritual convictions. I've observed over the years a very interesting thing in that regard - which is not new because it was something that was evidenced from the very beginning of the Christian Church on this earth - that a lot of people who have little personal interest in spiritual things (some of them even would say they had no interest in spiritual things), almost unconsciously, a very substantial number of them tend to have more confidence in somebody that has spiritual convictions than in somebody that doesn't. I know things that used to feed back to me which I found a little amusing and yet in a sense rather satisfying. People would say, "I have no use for Manning's religion, but I'm glad he's at the head of our government because he'll be honest." And stuff like this. Indirectly, they were saying, without realizing it thsemselves, that the very thing which they said they had no use for was the basic reason why they had grounds to feel confident.

I mentioned that this is not a new thing, and there's a very interesting illustration, I always thought, in the book of Acts and the record of the early Christian Church. It speaks of two of the early disciples, Peter and John, going down to the Temple to pray in the afternoon, and finding a man sitting by the gate of the Temple who was begging, asking for alms. It said he was carried daily and laid at the gate of the Temple; his friends took him down and put him at the gate. And as people went in and out of the Temple, he asked alms of them. The thing that always seemed very significant to me was, why would they put him outside the gate of the Temple? Why didn't they take him and put him outside the bank? A lot more people with money would probably be down there than going into the Temple in the afternoon to a prayer meeting. Or why didn't they take him outside some big trade market, where the commerce of the world was going on? But here was the secular world, probably had no use for Peter, John, Christ and

everything they stood for, but they took their friend every day (he was lame from birth, he couldn't walk) and planted him outside the gate of the Temple to ask alms of the people that went into the Temple. What they were unconsciously acknowledging was that the kind of people who'd slip away from their work for half an hour in the afternoon to go down to the Temple to pray were much more apt to be compassionate to this fellow needing the help than a lot of their materialistic friends who had no use for the Temple. They would probably never even recognize that that's why they were doing it, but I could never find any other reason why they'd put him there.

I think that principle carries over today. At heart, people have a spiritual dimension. Man's a created being; he needs a spiritual dimension; he's not complete without it. It does something to people. And the skeptical world with all its cynicism about spiritual things, nevertheless in its actions acknowledges that you're more apt to get a fair deal from a fellow that has some real, genuine spiritual convictions. I think that was a factor in our government. I don't know, but I hope it was.

LS: The cynicism is so strong, though, today, that I wonder if that kind of dynamic can occur again.

ECM: I think it can. It's true people are more cynical today. Certainly the dynamic of leadership can occur today. I think in Canada today one of the great hungers in the public mind (I don't think a lot of them recognize it) is a hunger for leadership. It's interesting. We saw this demonstrated so clearly in the Old Country during the war, when Churchill came on the scene. Churchill in many respects had been a failure, politically, in his early days. He'd been jumping from one party to the other; he'd been disgraced a couple of times by his handling of public affairs; he was regarded as incompetent. But he had that dynamic leadership that came to its best under severe adversity. It's interesting that Churchill never had the British people behind him more solidly than when he used to go on the air and tell them, "I have nothing to offer you but blood, toil, sweat and tears."

My own belief is, in this country today with all our economic problems and social problems, crime, violence, and all this other stuff, that if we only had a dynamic leader who'd come along and instead of promising to give people everything on the face of the earth with a fence around it - this hand-out stuff that's been the stock in trade of the socialist crowd for years and which wrongly, I think, a lot of people have come to assume that you have to do to get elected - would say, "Look, this country's in one terrible economic mess. It can be cured. We've got the resources, we've got the potential. But it's going to be a hard fight and it's going to involve a lot of sacrifice. All I can offer you is blood, toil, sweat and tears."

I think we'd be absolutely amazed at the public response. I think you have a semblance of that in what's happening in the United States today. I've mentioned this before with President Reagan. Whether his proposals are over-simplistic, whether they'll work or not, is not proven yet. But he has given his people the impression of strength. "We're going to do these things which for years they've been telling us we can't do. They've said, 'You can't cut waste out of government; you can't cut bureaucracy out, get rid of a lot of the red tape and regulation.' But we're going to do it." And he's well on his way to doing it. And there's an upsurge of public confidence in the future of the economy of the States today that is fantastic, compared with what it was a couple of years ago and compared with what it is in this country.

So I think the public <u>is</u> ready for that kind of dynamic leadership. But our system today does not generate many of that type of leader because everything in our collectivist society of today mitigates against strong individuals. The whole tendency is to level to the least common denominator philosophy. And there's a loss of the admiration of excellence that once held a pretty prominent place in our country.

LS: Or even eccentricity and that kind of thing?

ECM: Yes.

LS: Just one final question. You know Kennedy's famous quote in the Sixties, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." Is that the sort of thing you mean?

ECM: Yes, that was an expression of that philosophy. I don't want to misjudge Kennedy because I didn't know him, but he put in words this very philosophy I'm talking about. I don't think he demonstrated it too much. I wouldn't regard Kennedy as a strong leader. He was young and vital, and in that sense attracted a lot of support. This of course if always easy to guess when you don't have to prove it or can't prove it, but my guess would be that had Mr. Kennedy lived, by the end of his term you would have found a significant reaction against him. I don't think he would have delivered.

He became a permanent hero before he had a chance to prove that he didn't accomplish those things, because his general philosophy was not in that direction. He was in a sense representative of a group in society that I admit does not incite any admiration from me at all, and that is wealthy people who almost capitalize on the plight of the poor and the less fortunate to make heroes out of themselves. It's the modern application on a large scale of the old thing we used to refer to as "slumming", when some wealthy person would put on some old clothes and hand out dollars, and they were heroes. To me, that's exploiting the misfortune of people to get a name and recognition for yourself.

As I say, I don't want to be unfair to Mr. Kennedy and say that's why he was doing it. I don't think that's true. But it carried a lot of that connotation. The whole background of the Kennedy clan was, you could buy the White House, you could buy anything you wanted, because you had the money.

LS: One very final question on that. Would the public today or tomorrow or in the next five or ten years recognize excellence in leadership if it came up?

ECM: I believe they will in a situation which has an element of crisis or emergency. It's one of the ironic things that history teaches us, that

people are usually the most united when they're in a crisis. And they will recognize and support strong leadership in a time of crisis, which they will not do under so-called "normal conditions". I always thought one of the most pathetic and yet so typical Churchillian statements in his book (I don't know whether it was in Blood, Sweat and Tears or one of the other volumes of that series that he wrote of the history of the War) was to the effect that "all of Her Majesty's enemies having been defeated, and all the threats to the nation having been removed, Her Majesty's subjects summarily dismissed me from having any further part in the conduct of their affairs."

You can see what he was getting at. As long as Hitler was there, and the aftermath, and the Soviet threat, and all that stuff, he was the hero. But when he finally laid them all to rest, then "they summarily dismissed me from having any further part in the conduct of their affairs." And that's characteristic of human nature. The reason I said earlier that I think we are ripe in this country today for that kind of leadership to come along is that we are in a serious crisis. We're in a crisis socially, economically, financially - and I think it's a crisis of sufficient magnitude that if that leadership emerged there would be a great support for it.

LS: I'd like to return now to some of the issues of 1958; these seem sort of strange in comparison!

In Alberta there was a lot of press given to the whole issue of fluoridation of water. I'd like your opinion on why it was such an emotional issue, and what was your Government's position and involvement in that whole issue.

ECM: I suppose it was emotional because for years it's been a controversial thing. You have one group of people, and they purport to have scientific evidence that argues that fluoride over a long period of time taken into the human system has detrimental effects. You have other groups - I think substantially the larger group - with eminent scientists in it who say that there's nothing to this at all, that it's a very sensible thing to put

fluoride in water if it's not there naturally because it's one of the best ways of preventing deterioration of teeth, especially in children.

You'll never reconcile the two because they've been eternally at war with each other. We were caught, as all governments are caught, in the midst of the conflict. Among our own members we had about three who were just vehemently opposed to fluoridation. Their opposition ranged all the way from the fact that this was medically unsound, it slowly poisoned people and destroyed their health ultimately, it was a long range, slow, adverse effect; to the idea that it was a communist plot to lower the resistance of the human race by poisoning their water supply.

On the other hand you had the majority who said that as long as the weight of scientific evidence seems to be that it's beneficial.... And what we did was leave it to the municipalities to settle by plebiscite. That was vehemently opposed always by those who opposed fluoridation generally, because they said that it wasn't appropriate to give people a right to choose something which you knew was going to be detrimental to them. We were not satisfied it was detrimental to them, but of course they felt it was.

So it was a very controversial thing. But we did provide legislation under which a municipality could take a vote on fluoridation. If it carried, then they could fluoridate their water.

LS: In May of 1958 there was a Federal election where John Diefenbaker won with such a wide, sweeping majority. I'm interested in a number of things. First of all, the position of Social Credit in that election and in the country nationally at that point in time. And secondly, your comments about John Diefenbaker: Did you know him? Did you have to work with him? What was he like?

ECM: I knew Mr. Diefenbaker. Not well, but I dealt with him of course when he was Prime Minister. I was Premier at the time and dealt with him as you

normally do between Premiers and Prime Ministers, both at conferences and in matters that we had to take up directly with him as a province.

On the earlier part of your question, the Diefenbaker sweep of that year of course wiped Social Credit out federally, in Western Canada, entirely.

LS: Was that a surprise to you?

ECM: I was surprised that it was a complete wipe-out. I knew they'd lose seats, because Diefenbaker was a Westerner, and in part this whole thing is related to the long-standing difference of position between Eastern and Western Canada. The Liberal Government was floundering around; it was very incompetent and there was obviously a public desire to get rid of the government of the day. Mr. Diefenbaker, when he won the leadership, as far as Western Canada was concerned had two things going for him.

First of all, he was a dynamic individual. He was flamboyant in oratory, and all that stuff. And he did arouse a great deal of public attention right across the country. His own forceful personality attracted a lot of attention and support.

He profited in the West also by the fact that he was a westerner - the first time there was an opportunity of a genuine westerner becoming Prime Minister. Mackenzie King had represented the constituency of Prince Albert for years in Saskatchewan, but it was purely a symbolic thing because Mr. King didn't know anything about Western Canada. He visited the constituency maybe once between elections, and it was purely symbolic. But Mr. Diefenbaker was a westerner. He was born in the West, he practiced law in the West, he knew the feelings and aspirations of the western people as no other candidate for the Prime Ministership had done.

So that certainly won him a tremendous amount of support everywhere west of Ontario. He was successful in that election in carrying both Ontario and Quebec too, which gave him the sweep.

My dealings with Mr. Diefenbaker were not many; not beyond the routine occasions when something that would come up where as head of the Province I would have to go and talk to him as Prime Minister. We were always cordial and friendly; we didn't have any close relationship. I did, as you indicated, offer him commendation on his election because there was a lot of satisfaction in Western Canada. At last we had somebody that Western Canadians felt at least understood their problems. You didn't have to start from scratch and explain where you lived and that it wasn't all wild wooly west out there - he knew. So I was very glad to see him head up the government.

LS: As it turned out, was that in fact beneficial over the next several years, or not?

ECM: Certainly during Mr. Diefenbaker's term in office there was a very significant difference in the understanding of western concerns and aspirations. He did not accomplish a great deal; that would have to be said.

LS: Why was that?

ECM: Well, I know Mr. Diefenbaker is a folk hero in Western Canada, but I do not personally believe Mr. Diefenbaker was an efficient administrator. I think there were two things that probably stood out. One, it was hard to get decisions out of the Federal Government because I think, for one thing, he insisted on being involved in too many things himself. His ministers never seemed to be free to give answers and make decisions. They always had to "clear it with the Chief" as they called him.

Of course that slows the process. And not only that, no one man (particularly at the Federal level) can possibly be knowledgeable about all those things. You've got to get ministers to whom you can properly delegate that authority. The Prime Minister, to my mind, stays in the realm of overall policy and supervision to see that government policy is being carried out, but not to be in the decision making process of

everything that comes along of any significance that the departments are there to deal with. But he insisted on it. We were talking earlier about a "one-man show". He was very much a one-man show in that sense.

The other thing may have had something to do with his training and profession. Mr. Diefenbaker could not make decisions. I think the best illustration that I've heard of it - that at least seemed to me to illustrate his attitude better than any other was this: Mr. Diefenbaker was a very good criminal lawyer; he could sway a jury; he could present an emotional appeal as well as the law. He was sought after. If anybody could keep you from being hung if you'd killed somebody, get John Diefenbaker. He was a good criminal lawyer. But in that type of practice the criminal lawyer doesn't make the decision whether to hang the fellow or not. All he does is present the argument - emotion, logic, whatever weapons he likes to use.

And Mr. Diefenbaker did exactly the same thing in government. He could get up in the House and present the case with all the emotion of a lawyer before a jury trying to save an innocent man from being hung, but in the court room the judge made the decision, or the jury made the decision. In Parliament there was nobody to make the decision except him and his government. And he didn't seem to have the ability to do the last step. He was at his best when he was presenting the case. But he fell down, in my view, on the lack of ability to make a positive decision aftr the case had been presented. And that's what you've got to do in government.

LS: His vision of the country was interesting. What are your comments on that?

ECM: I had a great admiration for Mr. Diefenbaker's so-called vision of Canada, for him, for his vision. For one thing, he was a man who wanted to preserve traditional values. I don't think it would be fair to say he was reactionary in the objectionable sense of the term. And it wasn't that he wasn't progressive; he was prepared to be quite progressive in changes, and he brought about a lot of changes in Parliament. But he had a love for the traditions of the country. Diefenbaker was first and foremost a Canadian - he'd have died for Canada, and that wasn't put on. That was genuine.

He didn't want to see the old traditions lost - and many of these went back to the Crown and the Monarchy and the ties with Britain. I don't think it is fair to say that he wanted to force those things on people to whom they held little interest, but he didn't want them destroyed. He didn't like taking "Royal" out of the Mail and "Royal" out of the Mounted Police and all of this stuff. They sound like little things, but I don't think they are little things. They are significant only in what they represent; they represent a desire to preserve something which has meant a lot in the heritage of the country. And he wouldn't go along with the concept, "Oh well, you've got to throw all these overboard because somebody's going to interpret them as a tie to Britain and the country's still a colony," and all this nonsense that you hear today. I admired him for that; I think he was on very sound ground; and I think Canada lost a great deal when they lost that voice that did defend those things.

LS: One final question. ... When one thinks of his final years in the political arena, one remembers (at least in the popular press) a very bitter individual. Do you have that sense of him?

ECM: I think he probably did feel quite bitter and frustrated. First because he bitterly resented his own party rejecting him. I don't know the internal ramifications there, how much was fair and unfair, but he had done more for the Conservative Party than any man they'd had for a whale of a long time. He swept the country, which no Conservative leader had ever done before, and he'd brought the Conservative Party out of the political wilderness where it had been wandering around for years and made it a government with the biggest majority of a government in Canada - which was no small achievement!

Now, a man in public life has to recognize that you're not judged by your party, and even your public, by what you did last year. It's what you're going to do today and next year that has far more weight, and of course that's where it fell down. Mr. Diefenbaker gloried in those achievements of the past, and he felt, I believe, that the Party people, in wanting to get rid of him, were not giving due recognition and appreciation to what he

had done. And I think he was very bitter, particularly at the people who engineered his defeat.

Secondly, he made, in my mind, a very, very tragic mistake, and one which so many people in public life make. He didn't know when to quit. He shouldn't have hung on. Those last years were pathetic. The man had lost his ability to be analytical; he would become just a repetitive voice living in the past, and he was accepted (I was going to say tolerated) because of the respect for what he had once been. But to me that's such a tragic thing. If he'd dropped out following the peak of his power he'd have gone down as a great man in Canadian history. But he did the same thing as fellows like Joey Smallwood did provincially in Newfoundland, and in a sense, even Winston Churchill in the old country. I always felt it would have been far better if he'd dropped out long before he did. To see a man who had exercised his influence in the world and his power of oratory, sitting in the House half asleep because he was past it - didn't know when to quit. That was one of Diefenbaker's great mistakes.

LS: It must be hard, though, for a public figure like that, is it not?

ECM: You mean difficult to stay, or difficult to quit?

LS: Difficult to quit.

ECM: No, well, it's difficult in a sense, but it's no more difficult than scores of other decisions. I always hesitate to say what somebody else should have done, but I think what happens with some of these men is, if they stay on beyond a certain point, they lose the capacity to assess the wisdom of what they're doing, so they don't quit. You ought to quit when you're still alert enough to analyze the thing and say, "Look, this is the sensible thing to do," not wait till you're so doddery that you can't think straight and then make decisions, because you'll make them on emotion, not on common sense. And I think that was probably his mistake.

LS: I'd like to move on to one final issue in 1958, and that was on the Borden Commission. What were its terms of reference, and your involvement or this

Province's involvement in its inquiries, especially regarding the Montreal market. What was the issue there?

ECM: The "Montreal market" had to do with whether we could market Alberta oil into the Quebec market, and the big market there of course was the Montreal refinery region. You have to remember, at that time there was a surplus of oil in North America. The United States had an embargo on imported oil; they would only accept a certain percentage of consumption imports. There was an embargo on Canadian oil going into the States beyond a quota, and the same on Venezuelan oil. The Americans did this because they took the position as a country that they had to have a healthy petroleum industry in the United States for national security, national defense purposes, if nothing else. Therefore they could not permit the level of production from American wells to fall too low or you'd discourage further exploration and development. So to keep that level up to where they felt it had to be to ensure continued exploration and development they put quotas on the amount of oil that could come in.

Now the Canadian Government didn't do that, and we bore the brunt of this in Alberta as far as the cutbacks of production went, because this was where the production was. I think I mentioned in earlier talks, we got to the place where oil wells in this Province were producing at less than 50% of their permissible production - not their possible production but their permissible production which was the rate of production that they were permitted to produce to get the maximum ultimate recovery. But they were cut down to less than half of that again on the pro-ration to market program because there was no market.

The only market we had was Alberta, eastern British Columbia (and some at the West Coast because the trans-mountain pipeline had been built, which took some of our oil to the Coast), and the inter-provincial pipeline that carried Alberta oil as far east as Sarnia, Ontario, and supplied the Ontario market as far east as the Ottawa River. I think I've mentioned before, the Ottawa River was the cut-off point because that was where the price of oil carried by pipeline from the West and the price of imported oil coming through St. Lawrence Seaway by tanker were roughly equivalent.

If you went further east than that, then it was more economic to use off-shore oil because it was cheaper than moving Canadian oil that much further. If you came west of that, then it was cheaper to use Canadian oil because it was further to move the imported oil.

Now Canada, including Alberta (Canada at our insistence quite often) had been putting a lot of pressure on the United States to waive their quota system as far as Canadian oil was concerned - let us have free access to their refineries - but they couldn't do that, understandably. It was hard for them to pick out one country and say, "We'll let you export as much as you like and Venezuela, you can't."

And the other point that they raised frequently was, "Well, look, we are requiring our consumers in the eastern States to use a substantial amount of domestic oil because we have this quota on Venezuelan oil, when dollar-wise it would be cheaper for them to use entirely off-shore oil. They're paying more because they're using domestic oil, but we think this is vital" because of the reasons I've said - you have to have a healthy petroleum industry for national defense. They would say, "You people in Canada, why don't you require your people in the Maritimes and Quebec and Ontario to use domestic oil. Why do you want us to take your oil when those regions of your country are supplied 100% with off-shore oil? You haven't a market there because you won't raise the price enough for them to get into that market. You want us to buy your oil so they can continue to get the cheap off-shore oil and you can sell yours to us." This was pretty sensible; I'd have said the same thing if I'd been in Washington.

Anyway, there was a continual discussion of whether it was economically viable to extend the market for Alberta oil into the Montreal area. The petroleum industry itself was divided on it. I think it would be fair to say that generally speaking the smaller producing companies which are not in the refining and marketing end of it leaned towards going to Montreal. They saw no reason why the people in the Montreal market area couldn't pay another couple of cents a gallon for gasoline which would offset the additional distance you had to move it. The larger companies that were in both refining and marketing as well as production were cool to it because

they preferred to get the cheapest source of oil they could, and often it was their own oil anyway - it didn't matter to them whether it was coming from Venezuela or Timbuktu or Alberta, it was their oil anyway. So they weren't warm to it. The Federal Government of course was scared stiff of it because it had political connotations. They wouldn't antagonize the voters in Quebec and Ontario by jacking up the price to have them buy Alberta oil. (These are things they forget today when the situation is the reverse). So there was political opposition to it if it was going to raise the price.

As usual in these cases, one group would produce figures that showed it was viable; another produced a set of figures that proved the opposite; and it was one of the matters that was referred to this Borden Commission - the economic viability of moving Canadian oil to the Montreal market.

I'm pretty vague on the final findings of that Commission, but I think their findings did not differ significantly from what was pretty well known ahead of time, that you could take it into the Montreal marketing area if you were prepared either to reduce the wellhead price to the producers in Alberta or the royalties to the Government of Alberta and Saskatchewan, or increase the price of gasoline a little at the other end (it wasn't a big amount, but a little bit). And of course, that the Federal Government was never prepared to do for political reasons.

LS: I'd like to move into 1959 legislation and look at five or six pieces of legislation. The first one is Chapter 73 which was an amendment to the Public Utilities Act. I'm interested in the provisions of that and especially the role of the Public Utilities Board.

ECM: That was an update of the previous Act. It was not a new Act. It was simply amending the existing Public Utilities Act. There were not many major changes in it. It did broaden the Act, as I recall, in their authority to look at municipally owned utilities.

LS: It broadened the Board?

ECM: Yes, broadened the Board's powers. If I recall correctly, that was only done if it was requested by the municipality. In other words, it was not something that the Board could interject into. But one of the things it did was that it provided that the Board on its own initiative, or on a complaint filed with the Board, could investigate a public utility. Prior to that time, about the only time the Board made an investigation was when a utility made an application to the Board for a rate adjustment. Now it had the power, if a municipality or a consumer group, or on request of the Provincial Government, if they asked or raised complaints about the way the utility was operating, the Board on its own initiative could move in and make an examination of the rates and things of this nature. That was a rather significant broadening of the Board's powers.

LS: In a related issue, there's some press at that point in time about the Calgary City Council Gas Committee going to Ottawa to ask federal assistance in protecting consumers. Do you recall anything about that issue?

ECM: Yes, they had one of those committees in Calgary, and I think they had one in Edmonton at one time. This comes back to matters we discussed earlier. There was the general opposition to exporting gas, raised right at the beginning by the two major cities (and some other consumer groups) and their argument was that their first and foremost concern was a permanent supply of cheap gas for their consumers, and that if you allowed exports, ultimately it would raise the price that they'd have to pay for their gas. They knew that they were getting their gas at fire-sale prices. I believe I mentioned in an earlier talk, there was a time in the Edmonton region where they didn't pay anything at the well for gas coming in from the Kinsella field east of Edmonton. There was no market for it, so the producer said, "Take it away." The sole cost to the Edmonton utilities was the cost of the pipeline to bring the gas in. As far as the gas itself, it didn't cost anything.

These people quickly saw that if there was an export market, this gas would then take on some value and they'd no longer get it for next to nothing. So as a matter of principle they opposed it. The reason they ran off to

Ottawa was that Ottawa had to give the approval for export of gas from the country. They were scared we would authorize its export as being surplus to Alberta, and they wanted Ottawa to block it, not issue an export permit to take it out of the country.

LS: What happened behind the scenes on that one?

ECM: They used to pressure us all the time, that we shouldn't declare gas surplus to the Province. Their position was almost that there couldn't be any surplus gas - the more the better. That was not realistic. Our belief (and I think it's been borne out by what happened) was that you can't expect or get companies to go on exploring for an drilling gas wells just to screw a cap on them when they get them and let them sit there because forty years down the road somebody may be prepared to buy the gas. The key to continued exploration and development is a reasonably available market. So our conclusion was that when there was no possibility of the volumes of gas being consumed in Alberta, even with the thirty-year revolving cushion reserve, unless we permitted that gas to go into other markets we were simply going to slow down all exploration and development which in the long run was going to defeat the very thing that the cities were concerned about.

LS: Was there any constitutional issue here?

ECM: No. The Federal Government of course has an undisputed right to control any product going out of the country. That was their right. All we could do, and all we ever did, was say, "X trillion cubic feet is surplus to the requirements of Alberta", having provided a thirty-year revolving cushion of supply. As a matter of policy, we took the public position that we would prefer Canadian consumers to have the first opportunity to purchase.

Now, where we would become involved in that was, for example, a hypothetical case where there were two applications before the Alberta Conservation Board for gas export from the Province, and one application was to take it to the United States and the other was to take it to Central Canada. If the two of them were there and you couldn't approve both of

them, we would certainly approve the Canadian one. They had the priority as far as we were concerned in that regard.

LS: What about the issue of the relationship of the municipality to the Province; this is sort of an end-run.

ECM: Well, there's no real constitutional issue there. The municipality is a creation of the Provincial Legislature; it has no jurisdiction except what the Legislature gives it. So it's not like the Province. The Provinces did not acquire their constutitional jurisdiction by virtue of the Federal Government but by the terms of Confederation, under the British North America Act, which is a different thing altogether. Whereas in the case of a municipality it's simply created by an Act of the Legislature and that Act can spell out its powers or take them away or change them, or do what it likes. So you haven't a constitutional issue.

LS: A second piece of legislation of that year of 1959 is Chapter 61 on debt consolidation. What were the provisions there?

ECM: That was not a very major piece of legislation. In a sense it was a carry-over from what was known as the Debt Adjustment legislation of the years of the Great Depression. During that time we had very stringent legislation in Alberta controlling debt. That was because when the Depression became so bad that there was no way people could pay their debt, there was provision made in those days for complete moratoriums on debt.

What the Orderly Payments of Debt Act dealt with was the case of individual creditors who had gotten into difficulty in paying their debts (and incidentally this was limited to sums of $1,000; it didn't deal with big debts); they could apply to the Clerk of the Court for a "consolidation order". They had to make an acknowledgement of all the debts they owed, all the circumstances, and so on. And then the Clerk could issue a Consolidation Order which consolidated all the debt and allocated so much per month payment on these debts by the individual, in other words, related to his ability to pay. If the Order was challenged by the creditors or

anybody, then it went to the Court itself, and the Court either approved it or changed the Order that had been made.

It really provided simply a way of reorganizing the small, individual debts. It didn't involve repudiation of debts. Sometimes there were cases of course where debts could be settled for so much on the dollar, but the creditor would agree to that because it was more advantageous to him to get his money even if he lost a bit of the principal.

It was a very helpful piece of legislation for people who got into difficulties and had a bunch of creditors all clamoring for their pay and each wanting a prior position. This Order spelled the thing out; 10% goes to this, 7% to that, and so on, until the debts are paid off.

LS: It sounds like a service that the banks perform today. Is that the kind of thing?

ECM: Well, the banks will provide financial counselling along this line, but they have no legislative authority to consolidate debts and say, "This is it." In the case of these Orders, if the creditors did not voluntarily accept the consolidation as the Clerk had finally determined it after accumulating all the evidence, then it would be referred to the Court. And if the Court approved it, then it had the weight of law. The creditor no longer had an option; that's what the Court had ruled, and he was entitled to X% of the amount of money that the creditor was paid monthly on his debts.

LS: Is that still on the books?

ECM: As far as I know, it is. These things of course have been revised over the years and other legislation has been added, but it was a good piece of legislation.

LS: The next piece of legislation is Chapter 42 which had to do with the establishment of the Department of Labour. I'm interested in its provisions and the thinking behind them.

ECM: Prior to this time, the Department of Labour had simply been a division of the Department of Trade and Industry. It had not been a separate Government Department. There were arguments both for and against that arrangement. The labour unions, organized labour, all insisted on a separate department for labour. I think they felt that a separate department gave greater recognition, greater status to the labour department and so on.

I was Minister of Trade and Industry when Labour was in that Department, and was Minister of Labour when it was divided. The biggest influence with us on keeping it as a part of Trade and Industry was that I always felt it tended to minimize the confrontation approach to labour-management problems. If labour was a part of trade and industry, it implied that labour relations were a mutual problem for both management and labour, and you sat around a round table to resolve them. When you set up a separate Labour Department, then you put all the labour representatives on one side of a square table, and management on the other. Sure, it gives a greater "status" in a sense to labour as such, but I have always strongly believed personally that confrontation is the worst way to settle labour disputes, that if you'd only get management and labour to both recognize that there's a mutual advantage to having good labour relations, fair remuneration, and a day's work for a day's pay, everybody benefits. And I felt that keeping labour as just a part of Trade and Industry leaned in that direction a little more than separate departments.

However, we recognized that with the growth of the Province and the growth of industry, far more unions and people involved in organized labour, it was not an unreasonable request. This request had been made for years before this, and finally in 1959 we passed the Act setting up the separate Department of Labour.

LS: And you took on that portfolio. Why was that?

ECM: Well, I'd had it under the old Department. I don't remember how long I kept it. Later on we had a separate Minister of Labour, but in the

transition period I kept it because we had the problem of unravelling the interrelationship between the staff and all this stuff.

LS: The next piece of legislation is one that we touched on briefly before, but I'd like to look at its provisions again - Chapter 29 on Homes for the Aged and how it tied in with the suspension by your Government of the Oil and Gas Dividend.

ECM: When we decided to discontinue the oil and gas consumer's dividend and divert that amount of money to the construction of what were known as Senior Citizens' Lodges or Homes, that was a major province-wide program. Our initial goal was 50 of these homes, and they accommodated about 50 people each, so we were talking about provision for 2,500 senior citizens.

The question then arose as to what was the best and most appropriate way to arrange for the permanent administration of these homes. The government was paying 100% of the capital cost because that was coming directly out of this oil royalty. We felt that the municipalities, the local communities, should primarily be the ones that administered the homes, and also that bore a part of the subsidization of the homes. So this Act provided the mechanism for doing that. What it really did was to authorize any municipality that wanted one of these homes, or where a home was being built, to form a foundation for the management of the home. The foundation was a non-profit body, purely to look after the operational aspects of the home. The municipalities were made responsible for the costs, I believe up to 20%. Most of this of course was raised by the fees that were charged to the people in the homes, but those fees were quite rigidly controlled, and the philosophy from the outset was that they were to be kept at the absolute minimum. The homes were subsidized both by grants from the Provincial Government and by the municipalities. They were assigned a percentage of it. The Province would pay up to 80%, and 20% was paid by the municipality.

Really what this legislation did was provide for the structure of foundations for administration purposes.

LS: But not every municipality had one, right?

ECM: No. Before this legislation, there were a number of "old folks homes" around the province; they were entirely municipal. Some municipalities had built homes for old people. As soon as this program was announced, that the Province was prepared to build these homes and pay for them entirely - the overwhelming majority of municipalities were applying to the Province immediately for one of these in their municipality because this relieved them of the responsibility of laying out the cash to build a home. So there was no problem in applications for them. The problem was to decide where do you put them, when you can't put one in every municipality.

We laid the Province out into zones, and tried to get roughly the same population in each zone, so that you didn't put two homes in one area and miss another one.

LS: I know one of the criticisms was that people were being turned away from homes because their particular area wasn't participating. Was that a problem?

ECM: This happened. You can't build 50 homes overnight; this took several years to begin with. And there were waiting lists prior to this time. One reason why we decided on this program was that the municipal provisions for old folks' homes was totally inadequate. There were hundreds of older people wanting someplace to go, in other words a big backlog. So we went through quite a period of years - we pushed the program as fast as possible, but they were being generated at maybe 15 or 20 homes a year, but even at that it was a three-year job at least. And this program never stopped - it kept on building away beyond the 50. So there were all the practical problems of the backlog and then the question of "who gets in?"

LS: Now I'd like to return to Chapter 63, and this was on the proceedings against the Crown. What were the provisions here?

ECM: Well, the basic principle in that was that prior to this legislation, if someone wanted to sue the Crown they had to obtain what was known as an

"Attorney General's Fiat" - in other words, the Crown had to consent to being sued. That was a common practice all over Canada for many, many years. I don't know whether it still prevails anywhere; I doubt it. And there had been pressure for years that this was archaic and it should be done away with, that the Crown should be liable for suit within certain stipulations, the same as any other party. This legislation provided for that.

It sounds a little bit unreasonable probably to have these "fiats" for suits against the Crown, but they were not brought into being to protect the Crown from being sued in any legitimate case. The initial cause and reason for them was that they prevent completely frivolous actions from being taken against the Crown. There are people that will say, "The Crown's got all the money, so sue them." As a matter of practice, if there was any valid case - a debateable case of course, but any valid case which if that provision had not been there would have been a case where the suit would have been taken, the fiats were always issued. It had very little practical restriction. But there was strong exception to the principle of the thing, that you had to go to the Crown and ask their permission to sue them. This legislation abolished that.

LS: One final piece of legislation from 1959 was Chapter 68, which was the Public Lands Act. What were the provisions and the background there?

ECM: The Public Lands Act was again simply an update and amendment of the previous Act. The additions and changes that were made primarily dealt with rentals on Crown land which was rented for agricultural purposes or for grazing leases. And it provided, as I recall, in the first place, where land was rented from the Crown for agricultural purposes, if the bushel per acre yield of grain crops was below a certain figure, the rental was waived for that year. This was to protect people who suffered drought loss and things of this kind.

I believe also there was a sliding scale of rental that was geared to production. That was really the new feature in it. The man's rent related

to the actual productivity of the land that he had leased, and protected him in the event of complete crop failure.

LS: What if you were a poor farmer - just poor management?

ECM: Well, of course, those things would be taken into account when his lease came up for renewal. All the circumstances under which a person could get a lease required that he demonstrate or satisfy the inspectors that he was capable of farming and had the expertise.

LS: How long would a lease be for?

ECM: Well, the terms of those leases were changed a number of times over the years. As I recall (and I'm vague on this) I think the shortest was 10 years and most of them were 20-21 years. But they were assignable, so they'd change hands a number of times during the lease.

LS: I think that's it for the legislation for 1959.

In that year, there was a committee study on irrigation in Southern Alberta, and I'm sure it wasn't the only one or the first one, but it was on the Bow River Development Project. Apparently your Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Halmrast, criticized the Committee's recommendation. It was a Committee that your Government had appointed. Do you recall what the issue was there?

ECM: I don't recall that particular one. As you probably know, the southern area of Alberta had very large major irrigation projects going away back before the days of our Government, under the Farmers Government. They had done a lot of irrigation development. We did face some considerable problems. There's always the problem of water rates in irrigation, rising costs, adjusting of water rates. There's the question of reclaiming land (alkali tends to come to the surface in irrigation) - that's a problem.

During the Depression years, some of the irrigation districts got into very bad financial shape because they simply didn't have the money to keep their

systems up. The other thing was that the systems were getting old. Much of the construction had been there a long time and there was the problem of replacing a lot of the old construction.

So these were issues that were coming up all the time. I don't recall the particular things that gave rise to this Committee, but we had a number of these because of the age of the system and the financial problems encountered.

LS: This province has an interesting history, it seems, in terms of dam projects and irrigation projects in southern Alberta, in terms of social impact and social issues always around them. Was this part of what this was at that time as well?

ECM: I don't think the social aspects would be a subject of the committee's study. Where the irrigation programs bore on the social conditions of the region, that part of Alberta was generally very dry. Normal grain farming was very hazardous both because of drought and also because of wind. Soil erosion was a problem. They had a tremendous lot of sunshine, and it's an ideal part of the country for specialized crops such as vegetables, alfalfa, clovers, things of this kind, and most of the irrigation was for that type of crop (sugar beets particularly, there were two or three very large sugar beet factories in southern Alberta that processed these sugar beets). With irrigation the farming was much more concentrated, the crops were high-value crops. In other words, a farmer only needed a relatively small amount of land under irrigation if he was raising sugar beets or specialized vegetables for canning factories, or things of that kind, as compared with a grain farmer that probably had to have a couple of sections of land to be an economic unit.

As a result, the region was much more heavily populated than the normal farm communities, because the farms tended to be small as compared with the grain farms which were large and relatively few people living in a community. So in that sense it had a bearing on the social structure of the community because it meant more schools, more hospitals, more

facilities for the families and children because there were so many more of them.

There were also the labour problems. The vegetable farming work (sugar beet farming particularly), much of it, had to be done by hand. It was a highly mechanized industry, but the thinning of sugar beets, for example, was hand labour. I think I may have mentioned this before. When the Japanese nationals were moved inland from the Pacific Coast during the War they mostly went to that region, were taken to that region. And a large number of these became employed on the sugar beet farms and later on became owners of the sugar beet farms - very successful vegetable and sugar beet farms. A lot of them had had expertise in vegetable gardens, market gardens, and that type of stuff, at the West Coast.

LS: One final question, and this is a small item that appears somewhere on page 53 in the press. It was an Opposition question, I believe, about a proposed nuclear explosion in the Alberta tar sands. What was that all about?

ECM: That was a very interesting experiment. I was always sorry that that didn't go through to fruition. We've mentioned in a number of the previous talks the interest in the commercial development of the tar sands, the pilot plants that had been built, and a lot of work that had been done in research and so on. A group of oil companies (I've forgotten all the ones that were in this consortium - it wasn't a large group) had done a lot of research on the possibility and feasibility of heating the oil in the tar sands at great depths by exploding a small nuclear device, which of course generates fantastic heat.

The theory was relatively simple. The idea was that this device would be implanted at the bottom of the tar sands, probably 1200-1400 feet underground, in areas where you had a big over-burden of maybe a thousand feet of earth and say 300-400 feet of tar sands and then you're back to the clay underneath it. Implanting a small nuclear device at the bottom and detonating, in over-simplifying the concept, the explosion would push the sands out, in other words, create a vacuum. The fantastic heat would melt

the sand, the cilica, and ultimately as the force of resistance of the sand equalled the force of the explosion it would form a huge glass bubble. As soon as the sand cooled, it would go to the equivalent of glass.

The research scientists satisfied themselves both in the United States and Canada that the great, overwhelming majority of the nuclear radiation would be sealed in this glass case. In other words, there would be relatively little radiation other than what became impregnated in the glass case that would form at the outer perimeter of the bubble. And then of course when the bubble formed the weight of the sand outside, the pressure outside, would collapse it. Then you would drill from the surface down into this cavity, and the heat (I've forgotten now but it seemed to me that with the underground retention of heat it would last for years, it wasn't a temporary thing) of course would make the oil in the sands fluid. Oil would flow into this cavity, you'd drill your well down from the top like a conventional well, and pump the oil out.

It was researched very carefully in both Canada and the United States. The Atomic Energy Commission in Canada looked at it, and of course we looked at it (our Conservation Board), and we were finally satisfied that it posed practically no radiation hazard at all, and approved it. And the Federal Government approved it. The American Atomic Energy Commission I believe was the body supplying the nuclear device (it was just a "baby" nuclear bomb), and everything was set. The approvals were all obtained, the Canadian Government, the Alberta Government, the Research Council, all the scientific outfits that looked at it, and the American nuclear authorities agreed to provide the unit.

But in around that period there was widespread testing of nuclear bombs. The Americans were dropping them over the atolls of the Pacific, France was, and nuclear testing in the atmosphere was commonplace. This was long before the days of all this great concern about radiation. They just flew them over in planes and dropped them on these atolls in the Pacific and blew them all to smithereens and then did all the research work on the effect of them, and so on. There wasn't the public concern. In the first place, the public had no idea what radiation did and all this kind of

stuff. So as far as this particular thing was concerned, I don't recall any significant opposition to it. Now, it wasn't publicized a great deal - it wasn't a headline thing.

But there had developed by that time, internationally, concern about this widespread above-ground nuclear testing. The radiation hazards were recognized by the scientists, and they finally had succeeded in an international agreement banning atmospheric testing of nuclear bombs. The next step was to ban underground testing, because in the initial agreement to ban atmospheric testing all the countries that were in the nuclear club at that time reserved the right for underground testing which had been the initial testing method and was considered safe if it was done properly because the radiation didn't escape to the surface. Well, then the scientists and the public pressure groups started to say that that was not safe, that the long-range potential of radiation in water tables and things of that kind was too great.

So there was an international movement to ban underground testing too. This just happened to come to a head just about the time that we had all these approvals to go ahead with this experiment. And I think I could say it was mutually agreed by Alberta and the Federal people and Atomic Energy and the oil companies that while they were satisfied this didn't pose any radiation hazard, it wasn't an opportune time to be popping off this thing when they were just approaching a very touchy agreement to ban underground nuclear testing. So in the interests of the overall picture, we put it on the shelf.

LS: Is that something that could be reconsidered?

ECM: Oh yes, at least I think it made an awful lot of sense. Today, of course, with all these environmental groups, I think there would be widespread public opposition to it. I'm just guessing, but I would think that the parties concerned in doing an experiment like that would probably just feel it isn't worth the hassle of going through two or three years of court cases and lawsuits and injunctions and protest marches and all the other stuff that you encounter today if you try to do anything.

LS: As you look down the road though, would it be less expensive than the way it's being developed now?

ECM: Well, it's a different type of development. All that's being done in the sands thus far is taking out tar sands where the overburden of earth and clay above the sand is not too deep to remove. That's a mining process. But just in round figures, while the estimates of the potential oil in the tar sands of McMurray are usually put at around 600 billion barrels, the highest figures I've ever seen that they ever hope to be able to recover by mining is maybe 60, less than a tenth. The other is all too deep.

The other method on which a lot of research has been done is the "in situ" method of extraction which involves drilling wells into the deep seams of tar sands and injecting steam. You've got to get heat to make the oil fluid, and then you can pump it out. That, economically, is probably more viable than mining. One of the big costs in the mining is removing these millions of tons of overburden which then needs to be put back in the hole. You're handling it all twice.

The nuclear device, at that time, they considered would probably be one of the most economic ways of extracting it. The device itself was costly and the safety measures were very costly. But in the first place it would make available oil from the sands which otherwise would just lie there forever because there's no way of mining oil at that depth. And the in situ processes - by steam injection and that - at that time at least had not advanced nearly as far as they are today. They were regarded as speculative.

LS: I just wondered, in looking forward however many years or decades...?

ECM: Well, if I had the say in it, and you didn't have all the human obstacles, I would very much favour proceeding with that type of experiment immediately. I think it has great potential. But as I say, today you're living in a very different world. The media and the environmentalist groups would be 100% opposed to anything like that, because a lot of the things they're opposing have less mystery to them than this had. So you'd

have to anticipate that. The trouble with that type of thing is that it drags out indefinitely; nobody can plan, and you can't finance it because you don't know how many years you're going to be held up with court injunctions and all that type of thing. Those are the reasons, I think, that the companies shy away from it.