

Adjournment Debate

hope by the hundreds. When the young lose hope, the nation loses hope. They are going to be the inheritors of a hopeless Canadian society, compliments of the present government.

• (2200)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

PIPELINES—BUILDING OF NATURAL GAS PIPELINE TO ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, on May 20, I asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) if he would provide a schedule for the extension of the natural gas pipeline into Atlantic Canada. As you are well aware, the natural gas pipeline was first promised by this government in Halifax on January 25, 1980 by the then opposition leader and now the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). At that time he promised that a Liberal government would take immediate action to ensure the full co-operation of all parties in the construction of the natural gas pipeline to Quebec City and the Maritimes. He went on to say that the pipeline would have reversible capacity, so that Atlantic Canadians would have the opportunity both to use western natural gas now and to send offshore gas to central Canada at a later date. The present Prime Minister stated at that time that the natural gas pipeline would be like a railroad in the 1980s, an energy pipeline that would have the potential to be a steel link uniting the nation.

On at least two or three occasions I have asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to give us a definite commitment as to when this natural gas pipeline will be constructed. I started questioning him shortly after the May, 1980, election. He has been soft-shoeing the issue ever since. Now we pick up the newspaper and what do we see but, "Maritime Pipeline Project Near Collapse".

Mr. Speaker, Atlantic Canadians have been very patient with this government. They have been patient because they believe in promises. They are people who generally have a great faith in the leaders of the nation. There is no reason for them to think that those promises that the leaders of this nation made to them should not be kept. When they see statements like this in the press, "Pipeline Project Near Collapse", they become despairing, and for good reason.

Why is it that Atlantic Canada always seems to be on the short end of the stick when it comes to receiving any benefits from this government? They are quick to point out that the natural gas pipeline will be completed through the province of Quebec and into Quebec City by 1983. They originally anticipated and expected to have natural gas flowing into the maritimes by 1982 or 1983. Now it would appear as though

there is only a bleak possibility that that will happen. They stated, a couple of years ago, that it would all depend on the viability of the prospects of the finds off the east coast. Mr. Speaker, those prospects are looking very bright indeed, but unfortunately the government's promises become dimmer and dimmer and dimmer.

Oh, they will make a great show. I dare say that the parliamentary secretary will utter great platitudes and tell us that things are going along very nicely, that everything is on schedule, that indeed the natural gas pipeline will be extended to the maritime provinces.

But one thing is certain, and I challenge the parliamentary secretary to deny it: all hope for the natural gas turnaround is now extinguished for New Brunswick or for Nova Scotia. I challenge the parliamentary secretary to refute that statement. Unfortunately, that is the prospect before us, I am certain.

Maritimers and Atlantic Canadians have the will to work, they have worked and they have contributed greatly to the prosperity in the past years of this nation. They have contributed in many meaningful ways to the development of this great nation, but for some reason or other this government in its callous, uncaring way seems totally and completely to have ignored even the fact that they exist. That is a great tragedy. It is a great tragedy for the future of the nation and it is a great tragedy for Atlantic Canadians who are facing the bleak prospect of at least another two years before they have the opportunity to deliver to the government the message that they will not be buffooned any longer.

• (2205)

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, it has been stated on many occasions in this House that the extension of the natural gas transmission system to the east coast is one of the top priorities of the federal government.

The Government of Canada has committed very considerable financial support for this pipeline, because it is in fact a central element of Canada's strategy to reduce the vulnerability to supply interruptions of those areas of eastern Canada that are presently dependent on imported oil.

The pipeline extension will provide new domestic markets for natural gas from western Canada. Under the terms of the September 1, 1981, memorandum of agreement between the governments of Canada and Alberta relating to energy pricing and taxation, Alberta will make market development incentive payments to the federal government to help fund national programs to expand domestic natural gas distribution systems, thereby making this less expensive energy source available to more Canadians. The governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are strong supporters of the concept.

As the hon. member knows, TQ and M began work on the gas pipeline extension to Quebec City some time ago, however the company has encountered some difficulties which have resulted in construction delays. The federal government had estimated that the construction of the pipeline across the