

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

away from anything personal and I shall always do so as long as my constituents allow me to stand in this house. I have been amazed, though, to find that he has become, even though he does not have a law degree as I understand it, the senior partner of a firm the junior partner of which is the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Pallett: And a very good firm it is, too.

Mr. Bell: You could not even carry the law books.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Chairman, I really thought that we as men who try to solve the real national problems of the country would get beyond what people in my profession call the pettifogging techniques.

An hon. Member: Of democracy.

Mr. Richardson: On that somewhat sordid and sombre note I close, Mr. Chairman, but I do not close before I say this. I ask myself only one question.

Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North): You will get a damned silly answer.

Mr. Richardson: Yes, Mr. Chairman, if I relied upon that hon. member I would. I am satisfied that this measure before us is one that is important to this country; that no great question of procedure should dim our view of what are the real facts of the matter. Number one, most of the country wants this pipe line; most of the citizens of Canada will be grateful when we have it, and when we go to the country—

Mr. Rowe: You will never come back.

Mr. Richardson:—they will be glad that this party put it into effect.

Mr. Zaplitny: Mr. Chairman, this has been a great debate up to this point at least. We have had just about everything that could be desired in a great debate. We have had a certain amount of humour, of pathos and even of near tragedy. When I see the hon. member for Eglinton back in his seat I see with what sweet sorrow he wears his crown of thorns and I ask myself, has parliament come to this? I say we have come to near tragedy because I think it would be a supreme tragedy, Mr. Chairman, if in the heat of this debate, in the cut and thrust of the charge and counter-charge that we have heard, the real issue were lost sight of. There is that danger, and that danger is all the greater when we realize that the time of this debate is limited by the threat of closure from day to day. Therefore, I should like to devote whatever time is left at my disposal this evening to what I consider to be the real issue in this debate.

In my opinion, what this parliament must be concerned with chiefly is the protection of the public interest in this matter. We may have differences of opinion about the method by which the pipe line should be built. There may be differences of opinion on many things, but I believe it is the duty of every hon. member who is sent here by the citizens of this country to see to it that the national interest and the public interest are protected by the action of this parliament. That is one of the reasons why I for one have been deeply concerned and anxious over what has taken place so far because the government is trying to put the opposition in the position of being the party which, in their view, is obstructing or preventing them from doing something.

We know, of course, that this is not a new subject in this house. We know that the government has had this question of a gas pipe line across Canada under consideration for almost five years. We also know that in 1951, when this question first came before the house and Trans-Canada Pipe Lines applied for their charter, the leader of this party and other members told the house and the country at that time that if we were to have a gas pipe line across Canada which would be in the best interests of the Canadian public and which would protect the public interest and the national interest, then it would have to be a publicly owned pipe line. If one reads the record carefully he will see that everything that has taken place in this house in the last two weeks indicates that the stand taken by the C.C.F. five years ago was the correct one. I believe it will not be very long before the government and those who are so vociferous in supporting the government on this particular bill are going to find themselves in that very position. I would advise my Liberal friends at this point not to come out too rabidly against the idea of a publicly owned pipe line because if they do they will have that much more to live down and that much more to take back when they come back to this house and ask this parliament to endorse a publicly owned pipe line. In my opinion it will not be very long before they will be back for that, if they are still here. That is the central issue. That is the desire of this group and for the last five years we have tried to protect the public interest by making sure that this monopoly—and that is what it is going to be; that has been confirmed by speakers on both sides of the house—shall be owned by the public and serve the public in order that the consumer in Canada will get a break. It is because of that fight that we have had this side issue that has loomed to the proportions