

Supply

Canadian Forces Base Chatham, which is in an adjoining riding. Not once did he refer to the loss of hundreds, indeed thousands of jobs in that region due to this Government's inaction on the closure of CFB Chatham. That is a complete dereliction of duty on the part of the Hon. Member for Restigouche. I take him to task, as I know the people in his region and Province will, over that.

He referred to his leader. I notice he did not waver when the question was put to him as to whether he intends to support his leader in the upcoming election. He acted like a bulldog, took the issue to heart, wrestled with it and left no doubt in the minds of Members opposite and his constituents. He will stay with his leader, the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), whom he described as the best leader this country has had in the last number of years, certainly the most dynamic. I will be interested in seeing how he goes into the next election, supporting in such vocal and endearing terms a man for whom he has expressed to the nation he has such great admiration. I look forward to watching that gentleman's participation and his support as time goes on.

I want to address myself to another item that is pertinent to the debate today. In reply to a question, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Smith) suggested to the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor), who had made a query about the National Energy Program, that he should look at the speech made by the Prime Minister in Halifax in 1980. I have a copy of the speech which the Prime Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, made to the Halifax Board of Trade in Halifax, Nova Scotia on January 25, 1980. I brought this matter to the attention of the House before, and I will do so again. He said at that time and I quote:

I am announcing today, as part of our program, that a Liberal Government will take immediate action to ensure the full cooperation of all parties in the construction of a natural gas pipeline to Quebec City and the Maritimes. The pipeline will have reversible capacity so that Maritimers will have the opportunity, both to use western natural gas now and to send off-shore gas to central Canada later. Like the railroad in the 1880s, energy pipelines in the 1980s have the potential to be a steel link uniting the nation.

• (1750)

In the Speech from the Throne, it was stated:

My Government equally favours the earliest possible construction of a natural gas pipeline to Quebec City and the Maritime Provinces and awaits with interest the report of the National Energy Board on this project.

The Speech from the Throne was delivered on April 14, 1980. The speech the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) delivered to the Halifax Board of Trade was on January 25, 1980, just some three months earlier.

We are all aware of what the National Energy Board has said in its subsequent report on the construction and status of the pipeline. Here, for the Parliamentary Secretary's reference should he care to take a look at it, is the speech that he suggested the Hon. Member for Bow River have a look at. I invite him to look at this.

Let us look at what happened to the natural gas pipeline project for the Maritime Provinces. Let us see what took place concerning that pipeline and how the Prime Minister's promises were fulfilled.

I asked a question of the then Minister of Energy, now the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), who is going to deliver this great document tomorrow, about that promise. This was on May 25, 1982, a short time ago. I asked the Minister what he intended to do about the Prime Minister's promise that the natural gas pipeline would be like a railroad into the 1980s, an energy pipeline that would have the potential to be a steel link uniting the nation.

At that time the Minister of Energy responded by saying that they originally anticipated and expected to have natural gas flowing into the Maritimes by 1982 or 1983. Now there is only a bleak possibility that that will happen, though the Minister indicated that much would depend on the findings off the East Coast. I said at that time that it is a great tragedy for Atlantic Canadians who are facing the bleak prospect of at least another two years before there is the opportunity to deliver natural gas to this region.

In a further response on the Late Show, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister told me that "the natural gas transmission system to the east coast is one of the top priorities of the federal Government". He went on to say that TQ & M, the pipeline contractors, 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 delays have been phenomenal.

A report was released on May 21, 1982, just a day or two before, which indicated that the federal Government and business officials admit that the plan to bring western Canadian natural gas to the Maritimes is near collapse because of skyrocketing cost estimates, labour slowdowns and other factors. Yet the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary continued to state that indeed it is a priority of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my possession a release made by the then Minister of Energy on June 2, 1982, just a few weeks after I made that speech in the House. That release states that the Minister's update of the National Energy Program on Monday night would provide subsidies to the prime contractor of the natural gas pipeline. He said that the Government would meet the full cost of engineering and survey work to be carried out in the next two and a half years and that a \$45 million interest-free loan would be repaid when the Maritime portion is completed.

As of April 18, 1983, TQ & M has not yet signed an agreement to receive this loan. We now find ourselves at a time when the delivery of natural gas into the Maritime region has been promised by 1984 or 1985 at the latest. The agreements have not been signed. That is another example of a reneged promise. It is obvious that the National Energy Program as released in 1980 and the National Energy Program update of 1982 are miserable failures. It all ties in to the Speech from the Throne of April 14, 1980, when these and many other promises were made.

There is no question that this Government should recognize its responsibilities to the people of this nation. It should recognize that it has contributed nothing but defeat by default to this country and to the people who elected it to serve them