

Mr. Nowlan: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the Prime Minister's answer, and only time will tell how valid those guarantees, ironclad from "iron head" over here, are.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Big man; big mouth.

Mr. Nowlan: The iron duke, then.

An hon. Member: That is better.

Mr. Nowlan: My supplementary is for the Prime Minister. A number of questions have been asked by my maritime and Atlantic colleagues on many problems affecting Atlantic Canada. Because we have not been able to ask about matters of concern such as commitments to Sysco, Georges Bank, Q and M Pipe Lines; recognizing the Prime Minister's concern and very involved activity in terms of the referendum vote in Quebec, and the fact that his government at an earlier time—because of western alienation—had a western economic conference to help focus attention on western problems, and in view of the fact that in Atlantic Canada we feel a little left out because of attention and preoccupation with other large matters, I ask the following question.

● (1500)

Would the Prime Minister consider having an Atlantic economic conference some time in the foreseeable future, after September, to focus with the four Atlantic provinces and representatives on the Atlantic area problems, and have that conference in Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is making a worthy suggestion that we will consider; but it seems to me that the premise of his question is very flimsy. In his very constituency, this government has just made a grant of \$43 million to Michelin. Very recently, this government announced the decision on the EPA.

An hon. Member: You would not go there.

Mr. Trudeau: I don't think it is fair—

Mr. Clark: That is also where Acadia University is.

Mr. Trudeau: I do not think it is fair to assume that this government has not been preoccupied with the Atlantic provinces. These two examples, one in the hon. member's very constituency, prove that it has.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NORTHERN PIPELINES

ALASKA GAS PIPELINE—JUSTIFICATION FOR ALLEGED ACTION IN CONTRAVENTION OF LEGISLATION

Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, may I put a further question to the Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

In view of the fact that section 20(4) of the Northern Pipeline Act gives the National Energy Board, on approval of the government, power to amend the financial arrangements set out in condition 12 in schedule III, but does not give it any power to change the definition of "pipeline", which in the act is given clearly as a line for the transmission of natural gas from Alaska across Canada, and so on, how can the Prime Minister justify using that order in council power to confront us with something that is totally different from what this act is all about?

This act is about a pipeline as defined in section 2 of the act. Is not the Prime Minister abusing that order in council if he uses it, in effect, to change the whole project?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, if in fact it was something totally different, then the hon. member would have a very valid point. But everyone who has been talking about the pre-build has not been talking about something totally different: they have been talking about building, in stages, a part of the entire pipeline.

If it were, in some other area, doing some other thing, I think the argument would be that it is a different pipeline. But when you are building a pipeline of a certain distance, and you decide to proceed with one part of it first, you are not doing something different: you are proceeding in stages toward the whole. That is the judgment we have to make—will the whole be built if we do the part. That is a judgment we will be deciding on tomorrow.

Mr. Knowles: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister if it is correct that nowhere in the act is there any reference to the pipeline other than the total, indivisible project, and if what is now proposed is something else, is it not something other than the act provides?

May I also ask the Prime Minister if he is aware of the fact that this House got into serious trouble in 1956 because the government of the day defied Parliament to put through a commitment that C. D. Howe had made to American financiers before he consulted Parliament? Does the Prime Minister want that to happen again?

Mr. Trudeau: Unlike the hon. member, Madam Speaker, I was not here in those days and I am not sure of the value of that parallel.

Mr. Clark: You were writing about it.

Mr. Trudeau: Once again, I understand the concern of the hon. member and his party. It is a concern that we share. That is why it has not been a decision which was easy and which has been made yet. Once again, when the hon. member says that nowhere in the act does it talk of building a part: that does not mean you have to build the whole thing at the same time, which is a physical impossibility.

To take comparisons which may seem simplistic, but which I think will make the hon. member understand, when we built