

Inquiries of the Ministry

and Commerce (Mr. Howe), is he in a position to say whether or not the canonized promoters of Trans-Canada Pipe Lines have advised the government that they cannot complete that portion of the line from Winnipeg to Ontario and Quebec unless they have the consent of the federal power commission of the United States to the exportation of gas to the United States? If so, is he in a position to say when it may be expected that the power commission in the United States is going to give Canada permission to do with its own resources what should be done?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman's question is framed in such language that I cannot make an adequate reply on the orders of the day.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Spéaker, if I have not made my question clear, I shall restate it. I asked the Prime Minister this question. Have the promoters of Trans-Canada Pipe Lines advised the government that they cannot proceed from Winnipeg on unless they have the permission of the federal power commission of the United States? That is a question to which the people of Canada have a right to know the answer. I also asked when it might be expected that that decision will be made.

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): Mr. Speaker, the promoters of Trans-Canada have given no such information to the government. I am not in a position to say when the decision of the federal power commission will be made. It is because of that uncertainty that the arrangement announced by the Minister of Trade and Commerce today was made, in order to ensure the start of construction this year and to provide for that start no matter when or what kind of decision the federal power commission gives.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I have another question. Has Trans-Canada Pipe Lines given to the government the assurance that, regardless of the decision of the United States federal power commission, it will not only start the 180 miles for which it has ordered the necessary pipe but will go ahead to Winnipeg and on?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): Trans-Canada Pipe Lines could not give any other assurance to the government than by demonstrating to the government that it had completed the financial arrangements that would provide for the construction of the whole pipe line.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What are those arrangements?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): The arrangements that they can obtain the finances required to pay for a line that is estimated to cost something like \$375 million.

Mr. Diefenbaker: From whom? From whom will they get it? From the government of Canada?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): I do not know. They are not going to get it from me.

Mr. Coldwell: May I ask a supplementary question—

Mr. Speaker: I see there are now on their feet four hon. members who rose at the same time. I presume they all wish to ask supplementary questions. I merely want to ask hon. members to consider the fact that in the last few days we have had several questions asked on the measure about which a statement was made today. A statement was made today and a spokesman for each party spoke in reply to the statement, commenting upon it. That statement was an announcement that in *Votes and Proceedings* there is to be placed a new resolution. On that resolution we shall, as hon. members know, go into committee of the whole where hon. members may stand up and ask questions, may speak for 30 minutes at a time, and may speak as often as they wish. Do they wish me to leave the chair now on the resolution that is on the order paper?

An hon. Member: Surely.

Mr. Speaker: Yes; that is what they would like to do. Can they not wait until that resolution is before us in committee of the whole? What are they going to do when they are in committee of the whole? They will not have any more questions to ask.

Mr. Knowles: What a hope!

Mr. Fulton: Yes, they will.

An hon. Member: They will have plenty of questions.

Mr. Speaker: Having said that, I will allow the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr to proceed but I will just say this. Let us not abuse the rules. There are many other subjects about which we may ask questions. Why duplicate the work? Why not wait until the house is in committee of the whole on the resolution? Then all hon. members will have every opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggarr): My question is a simple one. I was going to ask the Prime Minister whether, the government having approved of the initial step to build the trans-Canada pipe line by agreeing to the financing of the western end, there is any time limit placed on Trans-Canada Pipe