

Then he proceeded to okay the export of oil. Today we are paying for that because we do not have oil for hundreds of years. We have a shortage of oil, and I cannot understand how a country like Canada can make the same mistake twice.

I think we are about to make the same mistake twice when we deal with exports of natural gas, because now there is greater pressure on this government to open up the flood gates and to export more of our natural gas, the cheap stuff, the good stuff, the stuff that is available now, to the United States, and then later on we are going to have to deal with the expensive stuff, just like oil.

My question was directed to the minister. I raised the point that one way to achieve energy self-sufficiency was to keep our natural gas for our own use, and I asked the minister to comment on the ironclad guarantee, or the iron clad commitment which Canada should have, regarding the building of the whole Alaska natural gas pipeline before any pre-building of the southern portions of the pipeline should take place, because the words "ironclad guarantee" were the words of the minister when he was the Liberal energy critic. However, I did not get an answer to that question. Instead, I got comments that the minister was going to meet with the American secretary of energy and so forth.

Then I asked a supplementary question. I asked the minister to assure the House that if there was going to be any change in the Northern Pipeline Act the minister would come back to the House of Commons and seek permission to make changes in that act. The minister answered that, yes, he would come back to the House if there was going to be a change in the act. He slipped out of the question. He knew very well what I was asking, and that was whether there is to be a change in the act or the regulations under the act. The regulations under the act permit the Governor General to issue an order in council to allow certain minor changes—not major changes—in the act. The minister did not indicate to me—and I would ask that the parliamentary secretary do so—that ironclad guarantee and that ironclad commitment that there will be no order in council to allow the pre-building of the Alaska pipeline.

Let me explain. The original condition in the act was that all segments of the pipeline would have to be built at the same time, and financing would have to be guaranteed for the whole pipeline. It did not provide for building southern portions of the pipeline. Parliament did that for good, cautious, and sensible reasons, the reasons being that if we allowed pre-building of the southern line, we may never get the northern portion built. We would get what would amount to a natural gas pipeline sucking out—

Mr. Nickerson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: One moment.

Mr. Nickerson: A point of order—

Mr. Knowles: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is no point of order at this time of the debate.

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Nickerson: It does not matter that there is not order?

Mr. Knowles: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is out of order. The hon. member for Vancouver-Kinross (Mr. Waddell) will please continue his remarks.

An hon. Member: Read Beaudesne.

Mr. Waddell: Perhaps the hon. member should get his teddy bear and put it on his desk as he did in the last House.

What I was saying, as I was in full flight à la the hon. member from St. John's, was that if we allow the pre-building of that southern portion of the pipeline, it will suck out all the cheap Canadian gas to American markets right now, and we will never get the full pipeline built. That is why I want the parliamentary secretary to give us an answer today. Will there be an order in council permitting the pre-build portions against the intent of the Northern Pipeline Act, or will the government come back to Parliament if it is going to do that?

There is some hanky-panky going on with the National Energy Board. The National Energy Board wants to allow pre-building. It has issued an order to that effect, and the minister in this case, Senator Olson, has said, "Hold the hearing first on that and then come back to us". I think they are going to issue it. They are going to issue permission. They are going to issue an order in council. We in the NDP oppose that for all kinds of good reasons, specifically because of the intent of Parliament in the Northern Pipeline Act.

• (2215)

The fact that it is proving exceedingly difficult to obtain financing for the Alaska sections of the Alaska highway pipeline, indicates the dubious rationality—even from the Americans' viewpoint—of a gigantic project to bring frontier gas onstream at exorbitant prices. Canada's specific energy interest, in what is essentially an American project to bring Alaskan gas to the continental United States, has never been convincingly demonstrated or even addressed, either by the government or by the National Energy Board.

It was always assumed, both by the government and by the NEB, that the Canadian need for frontier gas was self-evident. Largely because of that assumption, which in turn reflected the fact that the government had neither a coherent energy policy nor a comprehensive industrial strategy into which frontier gas could be made to fit, the government allowed itself to drift into a pipeline treaty with the U.S., which may be of long-term benefit to that country but which makes a marginal contribution to our energy needs and at the price of considerable distortion of our economy.

We are now committed by the international treaty to permit the building across our territory of what is essentially a U.S. project, and the government is attempting to justify it on the grounds of job creation and as an insurance policy for the time when our own conventional energy reserves run out. Mean-