

Alberta Natural Gas Company

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): Well, if I have misinterpreted anybody I should like to know about it.

Mr. MacDougall: The fact of the matter is that no one can say where this pipe line is going to be built. At the moment the company is doing nothing more than seeking incorporation. If it does not get a charter, it must get its permit to export gas from Alberta. Then it must get approval for construction of the pipe line from the board of transport commissioners. No one can say in advance where the board of transport commissioners will direct the pipe line to be built. Subsection 3 of section 12 of the Pipe Lines Act contains this provision:

Upon the application, the board shall have regard to all considerations that appear to it to be relevant and in particular to the objection of any party interested, to a public interest that in the board's opinion may be affected by the granting or the refusing of the application, and to the financial responsibility of the applicant.

Hon. members will note that under this section the board of transport commissioners must consider any public interest which may be affected by the granting or refusing of an application to build a pipe line. Certainly the question of route is a factor which affects the interests of the general public. A route over rough terrain which is impossible to maintain without incurring enormous expense means that the consumer must pay a higher price for his gas. This would not only affect the consumer in Alberta; it would affect every British Columbia consumer as well. If the cost of building a pipe line is increased by several million dollars by reason of the choice of the route, then definitely that is going to be a cost factor to every consumer who utilizes the gas put through that pipe line.

From a perusal of this section hon. members will further realize that the board is required to listen to the objection of any party interested. In view of the many speeches that have been made in this house on the subject of the route of the pipe line, it is obvious that many hon. members are interested in the matter of the route; but I put it to the house, Mr. Speaker, that this is not the place to debate what route a line should follow. By passing this section of the Pipe Lines Act, parliament has said that the board of transport commissioners will decide where the pipe line shall go. I should think it would be proper on a point of order for you, Mr. Speaker, to declare out of order any further discussion on the question of route on the ground that this is not a matter with which parliament can now deal.

Many hon. members have stated that they would approve this bill if it contained a section providing for an all-Canadian route. If

such a section were included in the bill the functions of the board of transport commissioners would be usurped. Suppose for the sake of argument that this bill should provide for a route to Vancouver entirely over Canadian territory, before any line is built into the United States; and suppose that with such a proviso the company applied to the board of transport commissioners for approval of its route and the board decided that the route in question would not best serve the interests of the Canadian public. In that case it is quite obvious that the board would not be able to deal with the company until its charter was amended.

Mr. Cruickshank: What statute are you reading from?

Mr. MacDougall: Mr. Speaker, I must say that a week ago tonight I was not so rude as to interrupt the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) or any other hon. member.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think I should point out that all interruptions are not necessarily rude, so I would ask the hon. member to withdraw the implication of that remark.

Mr. MacDougall: I withdraw with pleasure. When I addressed the house on October 28 last I also said I wanted the interests of Canadian consumers to be protected. I want Canadians to have first call on this natural gas, and in particular I want citizens of British Columbia, more particularly those of greater Vancouver, to have a call upon the gas before a call can be made on behalf of citizens of the United States. I believe that can be accomplished by the authorities who grant export permits; and that these authorities, both in Edmonton and in Ottawa, will see to it that this is done. I said also at that time that I hold no brief for any company in particular, but I am against the creation of a monopoly on behalf of any company already incorporated, through the refusal by parliament of this or any other application.

I say further that we in this parliament are looked upon as a democratic and eminently fair body. I believe that the people behind the Alberta Natural Gas Company have relied upon our fairness in coming back at this time. In doing so they have incurred additional expense. I understand it has cost them several thousand dollars extra just to advertise in the newspapers of this country their intention to make this further application to parliament. If they were not sure of our fairness of mind, and if they were not sure of their ability to serve the interests of the Canadian public, they would not have come back.