

*Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation*

of very great importance in this house, and that is the sovereignty of parliament itself.

In the last few days a great deal has been said about some of the danger to the democratic procedure in this house and to parliament itself. So far as the opposition members are concerned, at times it may appear as if we have become overexcited on this issue. But let me say, Mr. Chairman, that if the hon. members who are now sitting on the other side and who are supporting the government found themselves sitting on this side of the house, as no doubt they will in due time, and if they were told that on an important issue such as this, which involves the expenditure of about \$130 million of the Canadian taxpayers' money, they were not going to be able to take the time they required to discuss the issue properly, to inquire into all the details and to come to a sober and reasonable decision in the end, I am sure they would react with the same violence, perhaps greater, as has been witnessed in this house in the last few days.

Let me also say this. I address myself particularly to the private members on the other side of the house, for many of whom I have a great admiration. What has taken place in this house in the last few weeks has not been a credit to them because, even if they may feel obligated to support the measure that was brought into this house by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, they have no excuse whatever for allowing the government to ride rough-shod over the ordinary procedure of this house. Not only have they been a party to the attempt to break practically every rule in the rule book, but the abject obeisance with which they burned incense at the feet of the Minister of Trade and Commerce has come mighty close to breaking the first commandment.

This is confirmed by some of the statements that have been made in the heat of this debate by members of the Liberal party—when they are read in *Hansard* in more sober moments—by members of the Liberal party who, after all, have a great responsibility, because it is by the grace of the private member sitting on the Liberal side of the house that this government stays in power. Let there be no mistake about that. The government as a government has no status in this house. It is merely the temporary trustee of the public treasury. It is the members who support that government, or are willing to support it as long as they think the government is right, who give the government the power that it has.

Let me say that some of the things that they have done and some of the things they have said lead us to ask the question whether they believe the a.b.c. of Liberalism has now

[Mr. Zaplitny.]

gone down to arrogance, bribery and corruption? Mr. Chairman, the newspapers across this country have taken up this question of what has happened in the house. I am glad to see that even a newspaper like the *Winnipeg Free Press* in my own province which ordinarily supports the Liberal cause has had some very strong words to say about what has happened in this house. In a recent editorial they quoted a speech made by the leader of this group in which he referred to what had happened here as "an abomination". In commenting upon that and in agreeing with my leader they add to that:

It is an abomination to the heart of every man of every party who cares for free discussion and democratic institutions.

Then they go farther than that, as do other newspapers, and point out that one of the greatest sins has been committed by the the government. I am referring to the procedural wrangle we have had. That has been not only because the government has sought to ride roughshod over the ordinary procedures in this house but because in their very statements which are on the record they have either deliberately or otherwise sought to mislead this house and particularly to mislead the opposition.

The Minister of Finance, who I see is in his place, speaking in the house on May 7, said these words:

It seems to me that when the present resolution on the order paper with respect to Trans-Canada is called for discussion, every avenue of discussion with respect to the building, the financing or the like is open to opposition members . . . On the Trans-Canada resolution all these things can be said.

Those words appear at page 3613 of *Hansard*.

The Minister of Finance was making that statement in order to prevent a discussion which had arisen and his statement was to the effect: "Why discuss it now? When we get to the resolution stage in this house you will have all the time you want to discuss whatever details you want to discuss."

**Mr. Harris:** I did not say that.

**Mr. Zaplitny:** That is the only interpretation you can take out of this statement. Certainly there was no hint whatsoever that there was going to be a time limit or that closure would be announced. The minister gave the opposition reason to believe in so many words that if the discussion which arose at that time were postponed then when we reached the normal resolution stage in the ordinary course of events hon. members of the opposition would have all the time they required to examine every part of that resolution. That was the statement.