

Mackenzie Delta prior to the granting of leave to open the main system.

Let me hasten to emphasize that this terminating provision does not reflect any present doubt on our part about the need to press forward with development of a link to the Delta within the foreseeable future. Members of the official opposition will be pleased that we have adopted the Sunset provisions recently advocated by members of that party in the debate with respect to this agency and that it will not be financed by the taxpayer, but the companies involved.

This great project on which Canada and the United States are preparing to embark is the outcome of a long and dynamic process that has intensively engaged the private sector, governments, and the public on both sides of the border. Each has had, and continues to have a crucial role to play.

The various applicants competed vigorously for approval of their respective projects for transporting Arctic gas to southern markets, and in the process added immensely to our fund of knowledge. The Alcan-Foothills group of companies that eventually was successful proved itself to be energetic, resourceful, and responsive to issues of public concern. And those public concerns were very capably and forcefully registered by a wide variety of interested groups and organizations in both countries. It should be noted that Foothills' spokesmen themselves have acknowledged the beneficial role played by these public groups in their own corporate interest and in the national interest.

Governments have inevitably had a major role to play as well in view of the extreme importance of energy to the national interest, the international character of the project, and the inherent need for a legislative and regulatory framework to control all aspects of pipeline construction and operation.

Following the enactment of this legislation there will still remain a number of challenges to be met and overcome. The project companies, the suppliers of pipeline goods and services, financial institutions, public interest groups, and governments at every level all have a continuing and important role to play in ensuring that the system is developed and built in a way that will best serve the national interest in the years that lie ahead.

As the member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) anticipated in putting a question to me shortly before the first reading of the legislation, this is a lengthy and complicated bill. I appreciate that members will want to give it careful study. Yet it is also important that we deal with it as expeditiously as possible so as to establish the legislative framework that will govern the project and create the Northern Pipeline agency that will have such a crucial part to play in its implementation.

On balance, Mr. Speaker, we are convinced that this immense undertaking will yield very substantial short and long-term benefits for all Canadians. It will provide us access to a major new source of energy from the frontier that is both secure and cheaper than any other alternative. It will provide a substantial stimulus to output and employment throughout many parts of the country. It will have a strongly positive

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impact on our international balance of payments, and it will play a vital role in fostering the long-term development of the economy of the north. For all these reasons I very much hope that this legislation to give effect to the project will command the full support of all parties in this House, as I believe it will command the support in general of the Canadian people in all the provinces of Canada.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister a very short question. It relates to experiences encountered by Syncrude in Alberta. When Syncrude asked for bids on the construction of pipeline from Fort McMurray to Edmonton, a low bid came in from a Canadian-owned company which employed non-union labour. The international union leadership at Syncrude objected to this. Syncrude bowed to the pressure and awarded the contract to an American-owned company at a considerably higher price. Does this bill and the authority granted to the minister and the National Energy Board ensure that Canadian-owned companies will have an opportunity to bid on the construction of this and the construction will not end up in the hands of American-owned companies at higher prices as a result of these artificial pressures?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, in answer to that I would say yes, the legislation certainly provides for that.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I have a question—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I suggest we are getting into a debate on this issue. I will inquire whether there is unanimous consent to permit the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) to answer questions. Otherwise I will have to recognize the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) on behalf of the official opposition. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

● (1612)

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) would answer a question relating to the option now being studied as to 48-inch low pressure pipe, 48-inch high pressure pipe, or 54-inch pipe. Would he indicate to the House at this time any estimate of what differences there would be in the estimates that so far have been put forward in terms of man-years available on this project if, for instance, the selection were other than the 48-inch low pressure pipe, which the company has recommended from the start, or the 54-inch pipe, which is also capable of being produced in Canada, as opposed to the 48-inch high pressure pipe, because the 48-inch high pressure pipe cannot easily be produced in Canada and may have to be obtained from the United States or some other country? Can the minister give us any estimate of what difference it would make in total man-years of work?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the estimates which have been put forward, and to which I have referred since the announcement in respect of the agreement, are based upon the current plans of Foothills which in turn submitted the proposal