

*Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation*

It only goes to indicate that there is not a lack of funds as such for the construction of the pipe line itself, but that these companies who are interested in tying up the distribution of gas entirely are prepared to use the funds they have in order to go into the local cities, towns and communities to be served by the pipe line and make sure they have every city and town completely tied up through a system of subsidiaries or holding companies in order that they will have complete control of the distribution system.

That is a direct threat to the municipalities and to the provinces, because they go out to these various cities and towns, through their dummy companies, and offer them long-term contracts. They ask for franchises which in some cases might mean 20, 30 or even 50 years. They tie them up on a certain basis. They own the trans-Canada pipe line. They own the lateral lines. They own the local distribution systems through their dummy companies and they have then a complete stranglehold, a complete monopoly, on a public utility from the gas fields right to the kitchen range.

Is that the kind of thing that should have the assistance of this parliament, which is supposed to be here to guard the public interest and to see to it that the consumer of Canada gets a fair break with respect to the distribution of gas? Is that the kind of thing that this parliament should be assisting in promoting? It would be bad enough if this company were going out and doing this thing on its own hook, on its own capital, through its own financial structure. But it is twice as bad to have the Minister of Trade and Commerce get to his feet in this house and say that the public treasury of Canada is going to kick in anywhere up to \$130 million in order to assist this monopoly to get a stranglehold upon the distribution of natural gas right across the four provinces that it is going to traverse.

That is the kind of thing the people of Canada should know about. They should realize that the public purse is being asked to aid and abet the setting up of a public monopoly not only in the transportation of gas from the Alberta gas fields to eastern Canada but also, through the interaction of these various financial interests that are part and parcel of Trans-Canada Pipe Lines Limited, assist them to obtain a monopolistic position in relation to the consumers in the various cities and towns in the prairie provinces. Of course the same thing would hold true in the province of Ontario. That is the

serious thing we are opposing in this parliament. That is the reason we feel this legislation should be opposed and stopped, if it is at all possible.

The other day I asked a question of the Minister of Trade and Commerce with respect to the control of prices. I based my question on a statement that had been made by the attorney general of the province of Ontario to the effect that the province has no authority to control the price of gas except that which goes to the consumer; that so far as gas from the pipe line to the utility is concerned, it comes under federal control. On March 12 last I addressed a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I will not bother reading the question or the whole answer. I shall just read the paragraph which has to do with the price. As reported at page 2019 of *Hansard* he said this:

I notice in the press that the chairman of the board of transport commissioners was reported to have said that the board has no authority to regulate the price of gas in the pipe line even though the pipe line is interprovincial in character.

If what the minister says in that answer is correct, we have this situation. Neither the federal government, apparently, nor the provincial government have any power at the present time to regulate the price of gas from the pipe line to the distributors. That leaves the distributors—and of course, as a consequence, the consumers—completely at the mercy of this pipe-line monopoly. We are therefore opposing this legislation, because we feel that it is aiding and abetting the setting up of a gas monopoly in this country. We feel that it is a sort of trans-Canada give away. If this company requires a coat of arms, Mr. Chairman, to use as a trademark, I suggest it should give consideration to an octopus on a maple leaf shield with a background of stars and stripes.

**The Chairman:** Shall the resolution carry?

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** Mr. Chairman, may we call it ten o'clock?

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**The Chairman:** Has the hon. member unanimous consent to call it ten o'clock?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

Progress reported.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Harris:** Tomorrow we shall take the estimates of the Department of Transport. I understand that Monday is private members' day.

At ten o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.