

Adjournment Debate

In view of the replies I have received from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources I can only conclude that he has misled Canadians and members of the House as to the original reasons for which this pipeline was necessary and that, more than that, he is guilty of perpetrating a hoax on the Canadian public about the building of an all-Canadian pipeline.

The minister's arguments for the Sarnia-Montreal pipeline are many and varied and seem to be changing daily. At first when this proposal was advanced, he said the reason for it was time, that we had to get oil to Montreal as quickly as possible. Members of parliament accepted that reason. Now there is clear evidence that the Sarnia-Toronto pipeline has the capacity to fulfil the initial requirements of 250,000 barrels a day of the Montreal market. When I pointed this out to the minister, he then switched his argument by raising a number of red herrings. First of all, he said the Toronto extension was not possible because to get that capacity to the Montreal market would require cutting off three U.S. refineries. The minister knows that these refineries are on a monthly contract, that they can find oil elsewhere in the U.S., and there would be no immediate cut off because it could be phased-in during the construction of the Toronto extension.

He then changed his argument to one of capacity, saying that although the Toronto extension would provide initial requirements of the Montreal market, it could not fulfil future requirements of up to 500,000 barrels a day. I propose to the minister that the future requirements of the Montreal market might easily be met by, first of all, developing the all-Canadian pipeline in phases: phase one from Sault Ste. Marie to Montreal, hooking up with the existing pipeline in Michigan; phase two from Winnipeg to Sault Ste. Marie, thereby completing an all-Canadian route.

Upon hearing this argument, the minister brought out further obstructionist arguments saying there would be problems in getting right-of-way through Michigan up to Sault Ste. Marie, some 80 miles. There already exists a natural gas pipeline through Michigan in the same area. The minister then said, "Well, there are all the objections from the U.S. environmentalists which would delay such an application". This is still pure conjecture and I fail to see how any time would be saved by the proposed Sarnia-Montreal pipeline when there are some 4,000 farmers ready to object to the disputed overland rights-of-way in that area.

Then today he brought out another argument, saying that we cannot have the Toronto extension because it will not be reversible. Of course it will not be reversible. What is the point of having a reversible pipeline from Sarnia to Montreal? What are we going to reverse through it? To date there are no great oil finds off the east coast. The existing crude oil coming into the eastern market is from Venezuela, not the Middle East. It has characteristics different from western crude and the refineries in southern Ontario are not capable of handling this offshore crude.

[Mr. Symes.]

● (2210)

My conclusion has to be that the Sarnia-Montreal pipeline is not just an interim solution and that the government's announcement of an all-Canadian route through northern Ontario is a hoax. Both these arguments put forward by the minister seem to indicate to me that there will never be an all-Canadian route, because of the very nature of the Sarnia-Montreal pipeline and the minister's expectation of its upgrading and expansion. Because we will not have an all-Canadian route, this will only perpetuate the government's discrimination against northern Ontario and its hoped-for development in the form of refineries and subsidiary industries. Further, Mr. Speaker, we will not have security of supply if we do not get the northern route.

The minister is continuing to play into the hands of the oil companies to the detriment of a truly Canadian oil delivery system for the benefit of all Canadians. I call on him to reassess the Sarnia-Montreal pipeline, and I challenge him to give a definite commitment on the date when an all-Canadian pipeline will be built.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the only hoax involved here is that perpetrated by the hon. member who is trying to fabricate an issue. Once more I will repeat to him the cumulative reasons for the decision to build the Montreal-Sarnia line. As I say, they are cumulative, but I have no expectation that they will make any impression on him. First, the additional capacity in the line from Sarnia to Toronto would be 250,000 barrels a day if indeed the export to Buffalo were cut off. It may be that in time the export to Buffalo would be cut off, but I do not share his enthusiasm for the bad relations with the United States that would be engendered by cutting off these 135,000 barrels a day. New demand in Toronto for refineries now under construction in the Sarnia-Toronto area totals 130,000 barrels a day. That means, instead of having the capacity mentioned by the hon. member there is a balance of only 120,000 barrels a day. So to accept the hon. gentleman's argument one would have to lay a new pipe. So much for his argument about the suggested capacity, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, what we have done is to propose a 500,000 barrels per day capacity, one that will be financed initially by a Montreal throughput of 250,000 barrels a day, with the strategic opportunity of increasing that to 500,000 barrels. The hon. gentleman referred to Sault Ste. Marie construction. It is clearly on the records of this House that this would take six months longer. What is more, there is a further incalculable period—neither I nor any other person can calculate it—for administrative delay in the United States. We are concerned about the Montreal market and getting oil to it at the earliest possible date. This is why we picked this route, Mr. Speaker.

Is it reversible? Yes; and that is to take care of the possibility of Atlantic offshore oil being brought into Canadian refineries. It is only an option. There is no certainty that we will develop that capacity, but it certainly would not be available to us with the Sault Ste. Marie route. Further, that would not be a route for an all-Canadian pipeline. It would undoubtedly be a route which would parallel the existing TransCanada pipeline which