

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

discussed. It certainly was a proposal that, above all other times, should have received consideration before April 30. It certainly was a proposal that should have been indicated to this house as well as to the Prime Minister.

At the very beginning of this session, and several times since then, I have urged that this whole matter be referred to the standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines, which is the committee to which such matters are referred; or, if the government preferred a select committee to obtain all the facts, then that they appoint a select committee. If that had been done the facts would now be available. If that had been done we would have known of the McMahon proposal long ago. If that had been done we would have had a chance to have evidence before us prior to April 30, and so would the Prime Minister. We also would have been able to consider the Gardiner proposal. Furthermore, we could have considered any other proposals that would certainly have come before us if that committee had been set up for this purpose.

Perhaps once again we shall have some question raised as to Mr. McMahon's withdrawal. We all know why Mr. McMahon withdrew. He was warned off. That is the reason. That in itself should be a warning of the danger in the present situation, and the danger in the power exercised by the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

Mrs. Shipley: Prove that statement.

Mr. Drew: If there was one person who had a right to know about that proposal before any extension of the Trans-Canada Pipe Line agreement was completed, it was certainly the Prime Minister himself and the other members of the government associated with the Minister of Trade and Commerce. In fact, one thing about which this house deserves some information is why the Prime Minister showed so little interest in this subject. It is not only worthy of comment but it is worthy of explanation.

What we see disclosed here is personal government, one-man government; and it is time to mention something else that is raised by this fact. Centred in the hands of the Minister of Trade and Commerce are a number of activities that have no place in his department, and this is one of them. We have T.C.A. under his department when it should be under the Department of Transport. We have under his department other activities which should be in the hands of ministers whose responsibilities are associated with those activities. We have the Minister of Agriculture sitting silently by

waiting for announcements by the Minister of Trade and Commerce with regard to the marketing of wheat, and so it goes. The great Pooh-Bah of the government has all these activities under his control.

Now that we have here an example of the unwisdom of centring these activities in the hands of one man who has so little respect for parliament, it would be a good time for the Prime Minister to consider the reallocation of activities under the proper headings of the departments themselves. This is personal government. The real head of the government decides when he will and when he will not inform his colleagues, let alone the members of the House of Commons. Having been denied the information to which we are entitled, we are now confronted with the suggestion that, bad though this proposal is, it demands our acquiescence because anything else would cause delay. If this is wrong, we have no right to expedite a wrong. We have no right to approve a wrong course with a gun at our heads, and we will not do so. If there is any delay, that delay is the complete responsibility of the government.

Perhaps the members of the government may say it is the responsibility of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Certainly there are one or two of them who would do so. But the fact is that it is the responsibility of the whole government, and the Prime Minister is responsible for the operation of the government. The time has come for some insistence on the observance of the obligations of ministers in this house. The government knew last year that some new arrangements were going to be necessary. As reported at page 2165 of *Hansard* for this year the Minister of Trade and Commerce had this to say:

After negotiations with the government of Canada and the industrial development bank, the company announced on March 17, 1955, that it had been unable to negotiate a type of financial assistance which did not result in an agency of the government of Canada being in a position to control the company, and that such an arrangement made it impossible for the company to purchase its gas requirements.

If that was clear in March of last year, what have we to say about the situation now? If control of the operation of the pipe line by a government agency was going to prevent financing then, what about today? The government has been dawdling along failing to come to grips with this subject for more than a year, and now it is suggested that we must agree to a proposal, no matter what it is, presented to us at this late date. Without any basic information through the ordinary channels of committee inquiry which are a part of our parliamentary procedure.