

Alberta Natural Gas Company

rolling done by the hon. member for Winnipeg South (Mr. Mutch), ably assisted by the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Campney). They worked it; I mean, they got by. Let us forget all that. Let us come back to this point. Irrespective of all the difficulties we have had with one another, this amendment has been so drafted that we can at least in this house stand up and be counted as we vote on this question: Do we say this pipe line must be built on an all-Canadian route or do we not? Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I shall conclude by saying that I hope that soon we shall be counted.

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, after an extended debate a vote is going to be taken on this bill. With the moving of the third reading of the bill, it would have been quite possible to extend the debate for some considerable time by amendment and by subamendment; but the purpose for which this debate has been carried on has been fulfilled. The people of this country, particularly in those areas that are directly affected, have had an opportunity to find out what is actually behind the bills that are before the house and what the real considerations are. To an extent that should be encouraging to everyone in this house, we have seen some evidence of democracy actually working. In what has taken place there may be a suggestion that could be followed in other cases. Because of the very fact that the bills have been before the public, the public have had an opportunity to express their opinion; and that opinion has had some effect, even if not the full effect that we might have wished.

Certain things, however, now emerge clearly. I for one welcome the fact that the vote will be taken soon. The facts are all out in the open and, when third reading came, all that remained to be done, in addition to the actual wording of the amendment and subamendment, was to deal with the completely misleading statement made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) this afternoon. Because of the statement he has made, it is necessary to point out that neither the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) nor the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) has admitted to this house what the actual fact is, namely that the government must decide where the pipe line is going to go in every case where any question of export is involved. That is a responsibility that the government cannot escape. It is a responsibility the government must assume before the board of transport commissioners even have it within their power to deal with this matter.

When the Minister of Trade and Commerce made this suggestion that those who were urging a clearly-stated policy of "Canada first" in the development of these resources were being prompted by some particular interest in the United States, he made a suggestion that was utterly unworthy of any minister of the crown or of any member of this house. But what is more, he went on to give a completely erroneous impression of what the situation actually is. With his usual modesty, he informed the house that he was responsible for the Electricity and Fluid Exportation Act. That being so, he should be a little better informed as to what that act means and what it contemplates. I have no intention of repeating what I said to the house a few nights ago, except to read once again sections 5 and 6 of the Electricity and Fluid Exportation Act of 1907, which is still the law that governs the permission to place pipe lines where exportation is involved. Even if the government at this late hour would give the assurance requested and would follow the course which has been suggested—which would protect Canadian interests—the government know perfectly well that in any event they must assume the decision in relation to a company that intends to export. We all know that. What we have been emphasizing is the fact that while legitimate export should be permitted, the first consideration is to make sure that Canadian interests, not for today but for the years to come indefinitely, will be protected.

The hon. member for Regina City (Mr. McCusker) this afternoon placed his finger on a point that I believe should be in the mind of every hon. member. He pointed out that there were certain estimates that, with the contemplated use of this gas, the supplies would provide gas for fifty years to come. Fifty years may seem a fairly long time in the years ahead; but fifty years is short in the life of a nation. We want to make sure that these great reserves of power are available for Canadians for fifty years, for a hundred years, for a hundred and fifty years, during the period of growth long past the time that any one of us here will be directly concerned with what happens. Any present estimate of fifty years' supply is probably an overestimate, when one recognizes the fact that, with every type of power that has been used in the past, the use of that power during the years has always increased more rapidly than was anticipated. The main concern here is to make sure what our maximum possible requirements would be and then to make certain that nothing will be done that will limit our own development in the future.