

*Mackenzie Valley Pipeline*

with respect to a pipeline carrying gas or oil to the United States through Canada.

In summary, I believe, first, that we must determine what are our energy needs and resources. It is important to get a true picture. I suppose I am concerned about this because, in the past, the petroleum industry has exhibited what could fairly be called a credibility problem.

**Mr. Benjamin:** That's putting it mildly.

**Mr. Firth:** Next, we must look at the best way to reconcile this need with the interests of the north and northern people. That is simple enough to say but more difficult to do. It took Mr. Justice Berger almost three years to get this excellent report together. And what is one of his most important recommendations, Mr. Speaker? It is that the pipeline should be postponed for ten years, which would allow for the settlement of land claims and the establishment of new programs and institutions. That is the heart of the matter, and the heart of the motion before the House.

● (1510)

If we were faced with a graver energy crisis than we are confronted with now, the decision we would have to make would be even tougher than it presently is. However, I believe that we may still have a few years to decide. I think we should take time to work out the best possible solution. Anything less would be almost criminal.

We must get a perspective on this matter. There are many issues to take into consideration. I am against the pipeline, but I would like to see more jobs for the people of the north. I do not want to hold up economic development, but I want to see land claims settled. So, where does this leave me? And where does it leave those on the government side?

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Justice Thomas Berger has helped us in our job. He has given us an honest, straight-forward, intelligent and comprehensive report. It is now our responsibility to go from here. I feel it would be less than responsible for anyone not to give this report his wholehearted endorsement.

Another point I would like to make is that I have run in two federal elections in the Northwest Territories, 1972 and 1974. A major plank in my platform in both elections was that there be no Mackenzie Valley pipeline built until such a time as the native claims are settled. I won both elections.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Possibly the minister will allow the Chair to make the ruling which had been deferred upon the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark). The decision was reserved at the time the amendment was proposed.

I wish to thank hon. members, in particular the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker), who attempted to enlighten the Chair as to the judgment to be passed on the amendment moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition to

[Mr. Firth.]

the motion moved by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent). That motion reads as follows:

That this House urges the government to accept the principal recommendation of the Berger Report that no pipeline be built in the Mackenzie Valley for at least ten years.

The amendment offered by the Leader of the Opposition reads as follows:

That all the words after the word "government" be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

"to appoint a special committee of the House to consider the recommendations of the Berger Report and all other reports, studies and recommendations relevant to the building of a northern pipeline, and the method of settlement of native land claims and urges that no commitment in principle be made to build a northern pipeline without parliamentary approval."

The Chair at this time must make a decision on the relevancy and acceptability of the amendment. In so doing, it must look very carefully at the amendment in terms of its relevancy to the main motion.

In this particular case we have before us a motion, the subject of which is very clear. The motion asks the House to accept a particular recommendation of the Berger Report. That is very definite in the motion put forward by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent).

On the other hand, the amendment seeks to widen the scope of the debate. The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton says there is nothing wrong with that. The amendment seeks to widen the scope of the debate by asking the House, not simply to accept or reject the proposition contained in the main motion, but to consider whether the Berger Report ought to be studied by a committee of this House. That was not part of the main motion. To my mind this is a new proposition. The motion proposes the acceptance of the main recommendation of the Berger Report while the first part of the amendment proposes referring the Berger Report to a committee of this House for study.

While I can have sympathy with hon. members who feel we ought to proceed in this way in the sense of going through a thorough examination of the report before making a decision, I cannot overlook the fact that the amendment states that the proposed committee also study "all other reports, studies and recommendations relevant to the building of a northern pipeline". It seems that the amendment travels even farther beyond the rather narrow confines of the motion.

I am, of course, aware that these matters are all closely connected and related to the issue raised by the main motion. However, I am rather uncertain about their relevance to the subject matter of the motion which is a definite and specific request to this House to accept a recommendation of the Berger Report.

I can say the same about the third subject dealt with in the amendment, the bringing in of the settlement of the native land claims. Clearly it is an issue related to the broad area of the Berger Report and the northern pipeline, but I have difficulty seeing it, in the procedural sense, as relevant to the very narrow proposition contained in the main motion.