

Then later on, speaking in this house on May 22, the Minister of Trade and Commerce used these words, as recorded at page 4168 of *Hansard*. When he was questioned about the option on steel pipe the Minister of Trade and Commerce said:

... I suggest this is a discussion which should take place in committee. We can hardly discuss the contents of a contract now.

Here we have two ministers of the government telling the opposition when questions were raised, "Why not wait until we get into committee on the resolution and then we can go into all the details of this bill?"

What happened when we reached the resolution stage? Before any hon. member of the opposition had uttered one word or asked one question the Minister of Trade and Commerce gave notice that on the following day closure would be moved and the debate ended. Is that the way the opposition in this house should be treated? Indeed, is that the way the private members who support the government should be treated? I say that because the speech that was made by the Minister of Finance in the house was just as interesting and important to hon. members sitting behind him as to those sitting in front of him and whether or not he meant it to be so it was a completely misleading statement to all hon. members of this house.

The *Ottawa Journal* in an editorial published on May 29 comments on the effect of such statements in these words:

It is a grave thing for ministers to mislead the house; in Britain it is regarded as one of the deadly sins against parliament and public life.

Now, I endorse 100 per cent the opinion expressed in that editorial in the *Journal*. I believe it is a deadly sin against democracy and parliamentary life to mislead the members of this house by saying to them, "Let us not raise this question now. When we get into the committee stage you will have ample time to discuss every angle of this matter." And when we reached the committee stage, before anyone had uttered a word, the Minister of Trade and Commerce moved closure. That is one of the things that have stirred this country and given rise to a great many protests.

I come back now to what I consider to be the essential issue, and that is, what about the pipe line itself? We in this group stated in this house five years ago, and have stated over the years since then and from the beginning of this debate, that we want to see a gas pipe line built across Canada which is to serve the Canadian public. We have stated right from the beginning that we believe the only way in which that gas pipe line can serve the interests of the Canadian people

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fairly and impartially, and the only way in which it can be retained in Canadian hands, is through public ownership. I made that statement, Mr. Chairman, on March 15 when the original resolution which was abandoned by this government was under discussion. I spoke these words:

So long as the issue of stock remains in public hands, there cannot be any guarantee that the ownership of the pipe line will remain in Canadian hands. We can ensure that this public utility can be retained in Canadian ownership only if it remains in public ownership.

Since that time, of course, that statement has been more than fully confirmed by what the Minister of Trade and Commerce has said in this house and by what other hon. members have said. The only way in which we can assure the Canadian people that the gas pipe line will remain in Canadian hands, and therefore fully in Canadian control, is if it belongs to the people of Canada. There is no other way.

Now, that is one part of it and the other part of it is this. We talk about the reason for the gas pipe line. We want to serve the consumers across Canada. Our hon. friends to the left of us talk about the producers of gas in Alberta—

An hon. Member: And the consumers.

Mr. Zaplitny:—and the consumers also, of course. The question arises: If the Canadian people are going to be asked to raise approximately \$130 million in order to finance this pipe line, then who should own it after it is built? That is an important question. That is the real issue. That is the bedrock question that has to be answered in this parliament and it is a question that cannot be answered by a snap decision. It is a question that requires full consideration without any closure because it is one of the most fateful decisions which this parliament will likely be called upon to make in this half century.

Think for a moment what has happened. We have had experiences in the past where Canadian resources have been sold down the river into private hands without much consideration and then perhaps half a century later people regretted that they had done so and could now do nothing about it. There are many examples of this sort of thing, if you look through the history of Canada, where people had reason to regret occasions when because of the illusory advantage of the moment they too hastily gave their resources away into private hands and then lived to regret it at their leisure.

What is the government asking parliament to do? They are asking us as public representatives to go to our taxpayers, the people