

Westspur Pipe Line Company

I was going to say, Mr. Speaker, that we wanted to know whether the company which may be granted this franchise and charter is going to speculate on that franchise or charter, or go ahead and build the pipe line. I judge from the remarks of the sponsor that there is no question but that the company applying for this charter intends to proceed with the building of the pipe line mentioned.

As I said before, 50 years ago our railroad charters were granted without any plan or much consideration for the future. Surely that experience should teach us as members of this house, and therefore responsible to the Canadian people, that we must do everything possible to prevent a repetition of those mistakes. When this bill is referred, as I expect it will be, to the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines, the committee should investigate the several points raised by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, and in addition several points I have raised in these few brief comments. Pending receiving complete information on the questions I have raised, this group does not give final support to this measure.

Mr. Carl O. Nickle (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, in connection with this bill, may I say first of all that, like others that will be coming before the house this session, it has my support. This particular bill will involve authority to one company, Westspur Pipe Line Company, to build, when and if needed, certain oil-gathering pipe lines across provincial borders and perhaps also across international borders, in order to most economically connect either present oil fields or oil fields to be discovered with main transmission pipe lines or with refineries.

A week ago a statement was made in this house by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. It was the text of the statement he had delivered to the United States government. I should like to refer to one paragraph of that statement before commenting further on this particular bill. The statement appears on page 2297 of *Hansard* of March 23:

A great deal would certainly be lost in terms of continental efficiency if both countries were to develop their respective oil industries along purely national lines.

That statement is obviously correct. I fully agree with the government's conclusion, just as the United States oil industry and the Canadian oil industry fully agree that the soundest economic planning of pipe lines is quite right and in the best interest of the two countries.

To impose any restrictions that would prohibit any pipe line crossing an international border, and specifically the border between the United States and Canada, would be to

impose a burden which could be extremely costly to this country as well as to our neighbour to the south, and could in fact make it impossible to build a direct connection by pipe line, which is the lowest cost method of transport, between certain United States refineries, United States pipe lines or Canadian pipe lines, which must have markets across the border. In other words, to enact any restrictions by legislation in Canada that would prohibit a pipe line from crossing the United States border would make it far easier for the United States to say, quite justifiably, "We have no direct connection with your oil fields; we have no financial investment; we have no lines of communication or transport with your fields; therefore it is far easier for us to use alternative sources of supply instead of Canadian crude oil".

To that extent I disagree with the comments made by my colleague the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green). I believe, sir, that this bill should be passed in its present form, just as other bills to come before the house should be passed in a form that will not prohibit the building of pipe lines on the most economical basis for the benefit of this country and perhaps also for the benefit of our neighbour to the south.

I believe this is one of those questions that should be raised at this time, namely whether this parliament, as it has in the last two or three years, should take on itself the responsibility of dealing with matters concerning pipe lines for oil and gas, or the marketing of oil and gas—matters about which unfortunately not too many members of parliament know too much—and take that power to decide away from a competent authority such as the board of transport commissioners, or any other board this government may set up. I am thinking of such boards as the Alberta conservation board, which will pass on any matters which will involve pipe lines over Alberta territory, and the Saskatchewan board that has been set up to look after pipe lines going through that province, the Manitoba board, the British Columbia board, and so forth. Let us not bind in advance the hands of such investigating bodies. Let these matters be decided upon the basis of evidence, not upon the basis of prejudice or upon the basis of misguided nationalism or anything else but plain economic common sense.

I would urge, sir, that the government find the means of taking out of the hands of parliament matters upon which parliament, I am afraid, is not competent to judge, and to put the whole question of routing the pipe lines, oil or gas, and the whole question of