

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

included. No matter how the minister twists and turns he cannot get away from the fact, and none of his supporters can get away from the fact, that this Trans-Canada Pipe Lines Limited is and will be dominated by United States oil and pipe line companies, and that the Canadian government is subsidizing them in the construction of a major national project at the expense of the Canadian taxpayer.

I conclude my remarks by this statement, and I make it after careful consideration. I believe that this measure now proposed by the government is the greatest betrayal of the Canadian people since confederation.

Mr. Decore: Mr. Chairman, I rise to take part in this debate and being a member from Alberta I am vitally concerned with the issue which is before us now. We have had occasion tonight to listen to the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys as well as the hon. member for Peace River, the Leader of the Social Credit party, and both of these gentlemen are Albertans. So far as Alberta is concerned, they have placed before you the hard facts of the urgent need for the export of gas from that province as soon as possible. Figures have been quoted, and I do not intend to repeat them now, but the fact is that Alberta sustains a loss every day because of the wastage of gas resulting from the lack of export. At the same time this lack hampers our industrial development.

There are many producers in the province of Alberta. We have individuals; we have small companies and larger companies; we have syndicates. We have Canadian companies and we have United States companies. But by far the greatest producers in Alberta are the people of that province. They are the ones who have the greatest stake in this issue. This debate so far has been very interesting and very hot at times. I feel it is the duty of the opposition not only to criticize, but if necessary to oppose government policy. But that is not enough. It is also their duty to offer not only an alternative but a better alternative.

What has happened on this issue? The hon. member for Eglinton has suggested that the Liberals and Social Crediters have formed an alliance. What about this strange alliance that has taken place in this house? We note that the free enterprising Tories and the socialist C.C.F.'ers have got together. We have heard of the grand alliance. We have heard of the holy alliance, but it seems to me that this is the most unholy alliance we have yet witnessed in this house. At least the C.C.F., though I disagree with what they have to offer, have come out with a policy which is consistent, that is of public ownership. I still would like to know what

alternative the Tories have to ensure that, in the face of the facts before us, at least the prairie section of this pipe line will be commenced and completed this year. It appears clear to all of us that the only alternative they have to offer is delay, not only to embarrass the government but in my opinion to embarrass the people of Alberta.

Furthermore from the consumer point of view, Premier Frost has indicated the importance of getting gas into Ontario as soon as possible. Yesterday we had occasion to listen to the Leader of the Opposition who spoke for about two and a half hours but who has not given this house any alternative, nor has he mentioned one word regarding the stand taken by Premier Frost on this matter. After all the leader of the official opposition was at one time the premier of Ontario and certainly he must have the welfare of the people of Ontario at heart. But as one who aspires to become the Prime Minister of Canada, I think he should also have the welfare of the people of Alberta at heart. It is essential to Albertans that we have the export of gas as soon as possible.

Much has been said in this house, especially by the C.C.F. group, in favour of public ownership. The Leader of the C.C.F. party has challenged this government to call an election. I doubt if the Canadian people, in a matter of a few weeks, would change their views and come out in favour of public ownership. They have rejected it before, and certainly they would reject it now. I should like to quote the views of one authority on this matter of public ownership. He says:

If the governments attempted to operate the line themselves they would face considerable difficulties. In the first place governments have no experience in gas pipe line operation and they would have to employ experienced operators, without being able to give them the incentive of ownership or part ownership of the line. Secondly, the governments would be in the position of having to balance the consumer and producer interests and there might be a division of opinion between the governments of gas-producing and gas-consuming provinces.

We have heard the hon. member for Peace River express his view and he has pointed out the difficulties in this respect.

There are few objective standards by which it could be determined whether the producers were getting too much or too little for their gas on the one hand, or whether the consumers were paying too much or too little on the other.

Even if the governments rented the line or turned over its management to some private organization, so long as they owned the line they could hardly escape some responsibility for the policies of the private organization. Therefore, any such arrangement with a private organization would probably only be satisfactory in the short run.