

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

their move. We want to see this pipe line built because there are tremendous things at stake not just in Alberta but in relation to the whole country. This is a national issue. This is a thing that is good for the whole of Canada and I think we should look at it from that point of view as we in this group are trying to do.

I sincerely hope that good sense will prevail and that the representatives of the three parties on this side of the house and of the Liberal party will get together and agree to sit tonight, Saturday and Saturday night in order to see if we can obviate the necessity of a further application of closure.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, as one of the whips who might be called to such a meeting if it were held I wish to give the answer to the Prime Minister's proposal in the form of a very brief answer that was made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier on April 9, 1913.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Knowles: I know that my hon. friends are sick and tired of hearing quotations from Sir Wilfrid Laurier but they are going to hear more of them before this is over.

On that occasion Sir Robert Borden speaking on closure said:

... that the mere existence of the rule will itself prevent the necessity of its being brought into practice, at least very frequently.

And what was the reply of Sir Wilfrid Laurier? It is recorded in column 7407 of *Hansard* for April 9, 1913, and I throw these words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier back in the face of the present Prime Minister:

Holding a terror above our heads.

Mr. Martin: It does not even deal with the point.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister implied and the hon. member for Peace River asserted that we are being obdurate and ornery and trying to defeat and obstruct the passage of this legislation.

An hon. Member: It is true.

Mr. Knowles: They suggest that is something we have no right to do.

Mr. Lennard: What are we here for?

Mr. Knowles: May I ask the Prime Minister, the present member for Quebec East, to read again from some of the words of the former member for Quebec East, that great Canadian Liberal, Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

An hon. Member: He was the only one of his kind.

[Mr. Low.]

Mr. Knowles: This is what he said about the duty of an opposition:

... there are occasions, I repeat, when an opposition or a minority owes it to itself, on account of the strong views it holds upon some public measure, to oppose that measure with all the force at its command.

This is not a modern doctrine. This doctrine has been in force at all times in the British House of Commons. It goes back to the days of Charles I; the books are full of references to it. The leaders of the house in the time of Charles I, in the struggle against the king to uphold the constitutional rights of the people of England, presented to the King what they called the Grand Remonstrance, and the presentation of the Grand Remonstrance was opposed all night by some members until, it is stated in the books, the house looked like a starved jury. That was an occasion when obstruction failed of its purpose.

I ask the Prime Minister to note the next few sentences in particular. This is Sir Wilfrid Laurier speaking, that great Canadian Liberal whose kind we no longer seem to have. He said:

On another occasion in 1771, the majority of the house—

An hon. Member: Whoops!

Mr. Knowles:

—did not want to allow the publication of the debates. That strange position was opposed by a minority headed by no less a man than Edmund Burke, and Burke by whole days of obstruction succeeded in defeating the object of the majority,—

These are the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the former member for Quebec East, which I now direct to the present member for Quebec East:

—and, as he himself said afterwards, 'posterity will bless the pertinacity of that day'.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the day will come when posterity will bless the pertinacity of those of us in this house who believe that parliament is still free and that we are not called upon to bow our necks to the tyranny of a despotic government.

After a few more choice instances from British history—hon. members who know the life and times of Sir Wilfrid Laurier know how heavily he drew on British history in his defence of the rights and privileges of parliament—he said this,—but before I give this quotation may I say that I support the challenge given by my leader that the Prime Minister take this matter to the country. I say that on the basis of what Sir Wilfrid Laurier said, and I quote:

As I have said, there are some occasions on which there is a cleavage between the majority and the minority, and then there is an easy remedy, an easy solution. The remedy is not closure;