

the northern pipeline commissioner, about five or six days previous to that? The answer to the first question was that the minister did not know and that the proper person to ask resides in the other place. That person is the hon. Senator Olson. If I recall correctly, the order which appointed Senator Olson said that it would be his responsibility to advise and assist the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and, of course, there should be—must be—someone in this chamber to answer legitimate questions from the people's representatives.

The answer to the second part of the question was even worse. I asked what the government intends to do and whether it is concerned about the fact that this project, which originally was anticipated to be completed in 1983, would now be delayed five years, to 1988. The response to that question was a rather blasé write-off. It was a glib response that there was nothing to be concerned about, that everything was in the hands of the minister and his department and that we on this side of the House should not worry. I can tell hon. members that we on this side of the House are worried about continuing delays, not only in relation to the project about which I asked my question, but also in relation to projects such as Alsands and Cold Lake.

When, in 1977, the question of the Alaska gas pipeline was debated in the House, the gentleman who is now Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), and who was at that time president of the privy council, stated that that project would generate 25,000 man-years of work directly, and some 220,000 man-years of indirect work which would be done in the manufacturing areas of Ontario and Quebec. If we ever needed to get on with a project like that, it is now when we desperately need those types of employment opportunities in Canada.

As I said before, the original treaty entered into between Canada and the United States on September 20, 1977, and the act which incorporated many of the terms of that treaty which was assented to in April, 1978, envisaged a completion date of the project and a start-up of gas transmission through that line on January 1, 1983, just less than a year from now. The project is not even started, let alone anywhere near completed.

Nothing happened until about 1980, and then we had another go-around. I remember the pre-build debate. At that time we were given iron-clad guarantees by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that that project would go ahead until its completion. We received iron-clad guarantees from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I should like to know what happened to those iron-clad guarantees.

● (2220)

Recent events show that on March 23, the federal inspector of pipelines in the United States, Mr. John Rett, said that the project would not be completed until the winter of 1987, or perhaps January 1, 1988. This was originally denied by the hon. Mitchell Sharp, but one day later he had to confirm that the dates given by Mr. John Rett were correct.

Even worse things have happened since then, Mr. Speaker. An article in the *Toronto Star* on April 17 quoted Alaska

Adjournment Debate

Senator Frank Murkowski, a man who is generally optimistic and who supports this project, as follows:

"In my view, the project will be deferred for an indefinite period of time—perhaps two to three years."

The article continues:

A substantial delay could deal a big blow to Canada's hopes for the thousands of jobs and big contracts—

That is what is happening, Mr. Speaker. Delays by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources have resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs for Canadians all across the country. I should like to know what the government intends to do about it.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the concept of the Alaska Highway Natural Gas Pipeline was essentially started in the early 1970s with the Transit Pipeline Treaty.

This treaty was followed by the Canada/U.S.A. Agreement on the Alaska pipeline in 1977 wherein both countries formally undertook to support the project on a priority basis. Canada approved the pre-built segments of the project in the spring of 1980 after President Carter provided assurances that the line would be financed and that his 1977 decision approving the project would be amended to allow pre-commencement billing for the Canadian segments. Further assurances were provided by the joint resolution approved unanimously by the Senate and House of Representatives and the commitment of the industry sponsors to participation in the financing of the project.

With the change in government in the United States there temporarily existed some controversy over the pipeline's scheduling. Nevertheless, President Reagan clearly stated his strong support for the project during a visit to Ottawa in 1981. Last October, in a letter to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the President of the United States reiterated his support stating:

I believe that this project is important not only in terms of its contribution to the energy security of North America, but it is also a symbol of U.S.-Canadian ability to work together co-operatively in the energy area for the benefit of both countries.

With regard to media reports earlier this month speculating on a new delay in the Alaska pipeline project, I would like to state that the Northern Pipeline Agency has advised that the 1986 schedule was tight and it has slipped to a 1987 completion as a result of a delay caused by the waiver package proceedings in the American Congress; that the schedule which now appears highly probable involves the completion of financial arrangements by June of this year, the submission of the financial proposal in July, and the final official approval by December of this year; and, finally, with completion of financial arrangements by the end of 1982, the schedule calls for completion of all other regulatory procedures and certifications leading to a completion of the project by late 1987.