

reason I believe the argument put forward by the hon. member is premature.

The point raised by the parliamentary secretary is a good one. It is one to which we gave consideration prior to grouping the amendments. I can see there is a possibility in certain circumstances that since this section provides for the collection of money, and if a limit were to be imposed which is not now contemplated in the recommendation, it could have the effect of reducing by that amount the revenue to be gained in that way, thereby increasing the charge on the taxpayer. On balance I felt that to remove this element from the argument solely on procedural grounds would be reaching too far, because it seems to me the words here are capable of several other interpretations. I thought it more appropriate to allow this proposed amendment to go to debate to see whether the arguments developed proved that there is, in fact, a risk of a further drain on the treasury, in which case an amended Royal Recommendation might be needed.

It seemed to me that where we are dealing with a section in a statute which sets out fees in certain circumstances, or payment by private companies or applicants in certain circumstances, it would be very strict if I were to eliminate an amendment which sought to place control or upper limit upon those fees. While it may be necessary as the debate develops to take such a position, I did not think I ought to do it ahead of time.

I am mindful of the point raised by the hon. member but at the moment I think I ought not to accept it unless, during the course of the debate, I see some indication as to the operation of the section which expands upon the point which the parliamentary secretary has made.

Mr. Symes: Mr. Speaker, I should like to raise a point of order before we proceed with the motion before us. It relates to certain commitments made by the Deputy Prime Minister before a committee of the House. I have had some with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and I think it would be beneficial if certain of those commitments which relate to certain documents were tabled in the House and an explanation given with regard to the commitment in respect of Standing Order 65.

I refer hon. members to the record of the Special Committee on a Northern Gas Pipeline, issue No. 11 for March 15, where the Deputy Prime Minister, as reported at page 11:17 and 11:18 gave the committee the assurance that, before we proceed with later debate on this bill, he would provide for members of the House a draft agreement between the Government of Canada and Foothills Pipeline Company on the Dempster link, as it is called, and also the draft agreement on natural gas throughput. Perhaps it would facilitate our consideration of the bill if those two documents were tabled.

In addition, I wonder whether we might have on record in this House the government's commitment to amend Standing Order 65—the exact nature of the amendment the government is willing to propose in line with its undertaking in committee.

Northern Pipeline

Mr. Faulkner: I rise on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie, Mr. Speaker. Dealing with the second item, namely the commitment of the Deputy Prime Minister to propose an amendment to standing orders to provide for the northern pipeline committee to continue its work after this bill goes through and in the course of the construction, I reiterate that commitment now at the report stage. There is, I believe, circulating around the chamber tonight a proposed revised form of the Standing Order, but I am not sure we are agreed on all its aspects. So rather than read that proposal into the record I would suggest we carry on with the discussion this evening; hopefully, the Deputy Prime Minister will be back tomorrow and he might then wish to bring the matter to a head in discussion with representatives from all parties. I am ready to provide hon. members with copies of the proposed Standing Order should they be required, and talks can proceed with regard to any areas where there may be dispute.

As for the draft copy of the Dempster link agreement and the natural gas throughput agreement, I have copies here both in English and in French and I will be pleased to table them if consent to do so is forthcoming, or to circulate them, whichever is the wish of hon. members.

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Mr. Speaker: Does the minister have leave of the House to table those documents at this time?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one point on the subject of the commitment of the minister. That commitment is spelled out in detail in the minutes of the special committee set up to study the pipeline. Very uniquely in my experience in this House, that committee went through all the clauses of this bill without a single vote being taken on any of the proposals of the opposition as they were advanced. They were found to be acceptable by the government, and significant progress was made.

However, the only area which has yet to be clarified—and which I do not think is in dispute—is the frequency with which the special committee to be set up under the Standing Orders to review and to monitor will report to the House. Our suggestion has been a quarterly review, but we are flexible. It could be once every four months, but we do not think it should be any less frequent than that.

I think we must support the minister and urge the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie and his party to leave that area open. It is not urgent to pass that amendment to the Standing Orders at this stage and, indeed, it can be done after we return from the Easter recess. It certainly cannot be passed before the bill is passed. If we had that flexibility—in view of the minister's illness, which is the reason for his absence from this debate—I think we would be far better off than we would be if we dealt with that matter today.