

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

shackle him, just as surely as free men and free parliaments have done elsewhere; and you and I, Mr. Chairman, have seen them so die.

What is the second requirement of a cheque? I suggest that it is the name of the payee, and I ask who is the payee of this cheque? On looking at section 4 of the bill I find the name of the payee. We have not been permitted to discuss sections 1, 2 or 3. Section 4 is the first opportunity we have had to consider the nature of the person to whom this cheque is going to be made payable. Who is the payee? The minister talks of blank cheques. This cheque is not only blank, it is bunk.

I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to examine clause 4. In clause 4 I find that the payee is named on about five occasions, namely "the corporation." Who is going to negotiate a cheque made payable to "the corporation"? We have had no opportunity to discuss the nature of the corporation, what its assets were, what its liabilities were or what its possibilities of building this project were if we signed this cheque. As far as this minister is concerned I can only say this; how blank can he get?

Let us now look at the next requisite of a cheque. I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that perhaps the amount is something which should be considered. In this case the government contends that it is presenting to us—

Mr. Fulton: More instructions via the pipe line?

Mr. Mitchell (London): Yes; the pipe-line corporation is in action, I see. The government presents to us a cheque which it says is for \$130 million. I look at section 6, in which it is said that the amount shall not exceed \$130 million. Mr. Chairman, I ask you this question. Is that a proper cheque? I ask that question for two reasons. One is this. May the amount be less? But by far the most important one is this. What is going to happen if this chosen instrument of this all-powerful minister fails to raise the necessary financing? Then this cheque is going to be raised. This cheque is going to have to be raised.

Mr. Chairman, may I now turn to what is perhaps one of the other most serious requirements of a cheque and it is this. On whom is this cheque drawn? Who is the banker who is going to pay this cheque when we are forced to sign it? I suggest that it is the Canadian taxpayer, as each and every one of us knows, and that once again he is being put in the position so well depicted in various cartoons as "UNO Who". What does the average taxpayer know about what is taking

place on this particular occasion? We have been throttled here. We have had no opportunity of calling witnesses before us, as was done when this chosen instrument received its charter—

An hon. Member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mitchell (London): Somebody says "oh, oh"; and that very somebody was present, I believe, in the committee that examined and cross-examined the witnesses when they established to the satisfaction of that committee that they were able to finance and to build this line completely in Canada. Now he says "oh, oh". What has happened? Why have we not been given the opportunity, by examination and cross-examination of competent witnesses, to find out why this company that was the chosen instrument is no longer able to finance and build this line completely in Canada? Why have the Canadian people not been told through the medium of that committee and through the medium of answers—however inadequate—given in that committee what the proposition is? Not only are the Canadian people not being told, Mr. Chairman, but we have had closure thrust down our throats at every step.

I suggest to the minister that he could have saved himself and his government a great deal of trouble if he had gone into this matter on a businesslike and reasonable basis, and had applied closure if necessary instead of as of right. If he was interested in having the public, who are going to foot the bill, know what was going on, why did he not permit reasonable debate at all stages? Why did he move closure immediately on the resolution? Why on the second reading? Why on clauses 1, 2 and 3 in committee?

An hon. Member: For concealment.

Mr. Mitchell (London): Why did he do that? I submit, Mr. Chairman, that all he had to do was permit the debate to take its normal course. Then if he found that the debate was not taking a normal course, if he found that the opposition were obstructing and being unreasonable, that was the time to introduce closure and no one could have criticized him for doing so. But here he had a date set long before the people who are going to be called upon to sign this cheque had even heard of it. He had a date set, and he is determined to ram this thing through this house in the quickest possible time. Then he is amazed, hurt and dismayed to find that Canadians who sit on this side of the house are not prepared to be treated in that way.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Henderson): May I advise the hon. member that his time has now expired.