

Pipe Lines

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Drew: It was not so loud this time.

Mr. Rowe: They are quietening down; they are beginning to learn.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It is a little different kind of applause this time.

Mr. Drew: —but let us have that investment under terms which assure effective supervision and control for Canadians in relation to one of the most important of our resources, and by all means let us have this investment on a basis that represents real investment from the United States. Let us not be told that we are gaining some advantage when the government announces that Canadians are going to finance this through the channel of the government and then, if the company can go ahead, get control of the whole venture after the pipe line has been completed with Canadian public money; a strange way indeed of financing a venture of this kind. This is surely very attractive to everyone but Canadian investors. Where is there a single group of Canadian investors who have been offered such attractive terms as these?

I am making a serious statement, just exactly as the Minister of Trade and Commerce did, and I am saying that in relation to such a unique and fantastic proposal it is the obligation of the Prime Minister to avail himself of the machinery already set up by parliament and refer this for immediate consideration to the standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines so the facts may be obtained from Mr. McMahon, from Mr. Gairdner and from others, and that we may learn what actually lies behind this strange proposal.

It would, I submit, be a strange thing, after more than five years' delay, if we were called upon to deal with this matter without referring it to the committee set up for that purpose in the usual way.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggar): The Minister of Trade and Commerce, in introducing this proposal into the house this afternoon, has called this a great national undertaking—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Disaster.

Mr. Coldwell: —and as such I and many others in this house and in the country regard it. As a great national undertaking it is being undertaken today, if this proposal is approved by the House of Commons, by corporations which to the extent of 83.5 per cent are under the control of powerful United States gas and oil companies. How can that be a great national undertaking? As such I want to regard it.

The minister also said that private enterprise should be given an adequate chance to carry out this great proposal. Private enterprise? When we agree that the government of Canada and the government of Ontario, if the government of Ontario still agrees, will finance the undertaking of the unproductive area of the line from Ontario to Manitoba? Now we have this strange proposition of the government coming before this house and telling us that not only shall we finance with Ontario the whole of that pipe line through that region, but we are also going to finance, indirectly or directly, 90 per cent of the western portion of this line.

Mr. Knowles: Private enterprise!

Mr. Coldwell: Private enterprise? Abracadabra! What do we find? I shall take a rough average. At the moment we find that 95 or 96 per cent of the construction of this Canada gas pipe line is to be undertaken, one way or the other, by the public of Canada. How ridiculous can this House of Commons become? How great a sell-out can the government make of the people of Canada? I am convinced that if they placed this proposition before the people of Canada, either by plebiscite or in a general election, it would be turned down completely.

I have been in this house for 20 years. I have read the history of Canada from confederation. I remember the great attempts that were made by the predecessors of this government to retain the integrity of this country economically, socially and politically, and I want to say to my hon. friends that never in the history of this country has there been a proposal before this house which would tend to defeat the independence and economic integrity of this country as this one does.

I say to the government and to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, let them go before the people of Canada at this time to see what will happen to them. I am convinced, from correspondence and from people with whom I am in contact, that there was never a more unpopular proposition put before the people of Canada than this.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to say that the opposition—

Some hon. Members: Oh.

Mr. Coldwell: Very fortunately for this parliament, I can say "ladies and gentlemen." I wish we had more ladies in this house. But, hon. gentlemen, if this were placed before the people of Canada I am certain that the people of Canada would return a verdict of no confidence in the government.