

Interim Supply

These industries were established for one particular reason. Not only was there gas there, but there was a gas surplus. I know the minister said in reply to a question that he had been in touch with a distributor in the north who had told him that at no time had he turned down a request for firm gas. This may be quite correct because firm gas is gas which is supplied to householders under contract for a full year. This firm gas is high-priced. However, because the line went through, and because the company was seeking customers at the time, what is called interruptible gas was made available. It is supplied at a much cheaper rate. Because this cheap gas was available, these industries were able to open up in this area which had been starved of industry previously. In addition, it offset the cost of transportation from the larger industrial centres.

The minister pointed out that the National Energy Board had been telling the Trans-Canada Pipe Lines Company for some years now—I think the minister said three or four years—that there was a greater need for gas. It has now become obvious what Trans-Canada has been doing. They have been deliberately starving these industries of the north and compelling them to go on to the firm gas price, so the company can cut off this interruptible gas which built up these industries in the north.

I know the Minister of Industry has been very concerned about the north country. In fact, some two years ago Timmins was on the list of designated areas. Although the government seems to be prepared to put towns in northern Ontario on the designated area list, it is not prepared to ensure that gas going to Canadian customers goes through a Canadian pipe line. If this were done these towns could help themselves instead of going to the federal government, cap in hand, looking for some kind of handout. What I fail to understand about this government is where and how it has gone wrong.

● (5.40 p.m.)

Why are they allowing this situation to arise now? Why will they hamstring industrial development across the north, where industries will be at the mercy of, and subject to the laws and regulations of a foreign country?

Mr. Pepin: May I ask a question?

Mr. Martin (Timmins): When the gas main goes through a foreign country, you have put

your throat willingly into the hands of your competitors.

Mr. Pepin: May I ask a question? I think the hon. member is making four or five arguments in the same sentence. If you have another pipe line to carry gas from western to eastern Canada, does it not stand to reason that there will be more room in the existing pipe line for gas going to northern Ontario?

Mr. Lewis: But the line does not have to go through the United States for that to happen.

Mr. Pepin: I am trying to take the arguments one by one, to get them straight.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): I wonder what pressure was brought to bear on this government—

Mr. Pepin: Do not change the subject; stick to the point.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): —to change the clear, forthright and reasonable arguments put forward on August 25.

Mr. Pepin: This is no argument.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): What made them put this pipe line through a foreign country?

Mr. Pepin: I could ask the hon. member what pressure was brought to bear on him to make the case he is making now. We are all subject to arguments. People introduce arguments to you, and people bring other arguments to us; that is normal. I think the hon. member is casting—

Mr. Douglas: The hon. member is not arguing with himself. The government is trying to argue against itself and its statement of August 25.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): You know, two or three years ago the minister made speeches across this country. Finally, when he was appointed minister in this important field we thought that at last we had a minister who had Canada's interests really at heart. I wonder what happens to people who join this Liberal party? What is it about this Liberal party that seems to corrupt people so quickly?

Mr. Pepin: Stick to the subject.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): How can that party rationalize the complete about flips of stands they took so clearly and strongly in the past.

My time is almost up. Hon. gentlemen around me point out that we have had a