

Energy Policy

It seems to me that if those three conditions were met we should give serious consideration to what is commonly called the Alcan route, although I think the direction would be different from what has been proposed. But the general idea is to take the pipeline down along the Alaska Highway where there would be less environmental damage, less dislocation of the native people, and where we would not be required to make the tremendous capital investment which we will need for oil sand development, perhaps for nuclear reactors and for other forms of energy which this country must have.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) has said, as does this study, an "Energy Strategy for Canada", that we will need, between now and 1990, \$180 billion in capital expenditures to meet our energy requirements. I contend that if this country ties up anywhere from \$8 billion to \$12 billion in a pipeline that will give us minimal benefits, we will not have the capital to develop the other resources which we must have in the 1980s and 1990s to keep the Canadian people from freezing in the dark.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Therefore, I hope that the House will avail itself of this opportunity to express to the government how we feel about the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, and I suggest that we should do it now, not if we wait until the National Energy Board has made its report and the cabinet has made its report. The reports will not be referred to the House of Commons, as the ministers have said repeatedly. This is the time, now, before they have gone too far, before the Prime Minister has made too many commitments, before the government has laid all its plans on the basis of a pipeline which will bring only minimal benefits to Canada, for this House to say in clear and certain terms that we think this project is not in the best interests of the Canadian people.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles):

That the motion be amended by changing the period at the end thereof to a comma, and by adding immediately thereafter the following words:

"and this House expresses its opinion that the proposed construction of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline is not in the best interests of the Canadian people.

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to enter this debate and I welcome the fact that the opposition parties have put before the House a motion with respect to the energy policy. Indeed, I think most Canadians would welcome the fact that the opposition parties have introduced this subject, because for so long opposition spokesmen have been quiet about the direction which they think this country should take with respects to the energy policy.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Gillespie: I think I have the floor, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

Mr. Crouse: On many occasions we have pointed out the need for establishing Fundy power as a means of alleviating the energy shortage in Atlantic Canada, but the government has taken no action.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) has the floor.

Mr. Gillespie: Apparently the truth hurts. If opposition members want to make constituency speeches, that is their right; but I think that the Canadian people are looking to the House to deal with the very important question of the over-all energy policy, not just a narrow parochial view—which may be an important view to those hon. members, perhaps—but a view which encompasses the whole of the country.

I listened to the mover of the motion. I must say that I was disappointed and I think many Canadians will be disappointed by his remarks. Quite clearly, it was a good constituency speech, but I am not at all sure that the Canadian people will find in that speech what they were looking for; that is, the view of the opposition regarding the direction this country should be taking on energy policy matters. Perhaps that is not altogether surprising. A moment ago I indicated that opposition spokesmen had shown themselves to be very shy when it comes to offering views about energy policy questions. Indeed, the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works received a reference from this House a week or so ago dealing with an energy strategy for Canada. The surprising thing is that when that committee was ready to go, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) was there but there was not one Conservative.

● (1610)

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Would the minister please identify what meeting he is referring to? There have been two recently. Is he referring to both of them? If he is referring to yesterday's meeting, I was there, the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Bawden) was there, the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie) was there, and there was also one other member. I have been at all the meetings.

Mr. Gillespie: The hon. member is quite right. The three members to whom he referred were there at the end of the meeting.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to correct the hon. gentleman. I was at the first meeting of that committee last week. I was not in town yesterday morning and did not know about the meeting. However, the minister was not there last week.

Mr. Gillespie: Apparently hon. members opposite have thin skins.

Mr. Crouse: Apparently you can't tell the truth.