

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

If this assumption is even only reasonably fair, may I call a committee tonight, and I shall bring witnesses before that committee in the next 12 or 13 minutes. Certainly members across the way will disagree with me, but bear me out. First, I bring as a witness to this committee the premier of Alberta. I do not propose to be repetitious, but to my simple mind—

An hon. Member: I'll say.

Mr. Richardson: You can say what you like about my simple mind, but bear me out. I have heard that the premier and the people of Alberta want this gas transported out of the province as soon as that can be done. That is my first witness. The second witness I bring before the committee is the premier of Manitoba. If he were here he would say, as we have heard from the records already produced in the house, that the people of the great metropolitan city of Winnipeg and the people of the province of Manitoba want to receive natural gas as promptly as they can. I bring again to this committee, this group of 264 here in which we can allocate little groups of 20 men in that part of the house, 20 in another part and so on. I bring the next witness before this committee, namely the premier of Ontario and his provincial treasurer.

An hon. Member: I thought so.

Mr. Richardson: That is right. I am glad you had the time to have a thought. If my friend the hon. member for Broadview—

Mr. Hees: It was not I.

An hon. Member: Get it right.

Mr. Hees: Get your bifocals straight.

Mr. Richardson: If the opposition supporters or my friend the hon. member for Broadview would want to bring to this committee the premier of Ontario and the provincial treasurer of Ontario, they could not say any more than what they have already said in the matter of urgency. That is the affirmative side of the matter. What is the negative side apart from what we have heard in this debate so far? Have we really heard from those parts of Canada on the periphery, British Columbia or the Atlantic provinces, or from the province which I have the honour to represent any great outcries against building this great national project? None at all. Then I suggest that in the evidence of these witnesses that we bring before this committee we have heard—

Mr. Hees: Let us have the committee first.

Mr. Richardson: I have put before you the committee.

[Mr. Richardson.]

Mr. Hees: No. You will not bring the committee because you have not the nerve. Stop talking hypothetically and bring the committee.

The Deputy Chairman: Order.

Mr. Richardson: I am satisfied—

Mr. Hees: You are satisfied with yourself.

Mr. Richardson: Even with the hon. member for Broadview constituting himself as one member of this committee, I am satisfied that this committee of 264 members is adequate and sufficient for the purpose.

Mr. Hees: We have everything but the witnesses.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Chairman, I submit that is the first proposition or the first assumption. Second, an amendment and a subamendment have been put before us. Let me deal briefly with them. I heard the leader of the C.C.F. party last night say that while he disagreed with this matter being made a matter for private ownership, he believed that this company about which we are now speaking was the only one that could do the job. Therefore, in the opposition against this proposition that the government have put forward, the opposition itself is divided. It is divided because on one side they do not want private ownership. I will agree with them that as a thesis it is all right and I will deal a little bit now with that point.

First of all may I say that as a member of the House of Commons or as a citizen of Canada I am not afraid of public ownership. If the day comes when this operation should be under public ownership, I shall not rebel against it. In our economic life there are many areas that require public ownership. It may well be that this will be one of them. If that is the case, I have no doubt that the present government being then in power, as it will be, it will be adequately operated; and even if by some miracle the present government were not in power I would be satisfied for some at least on the other side, if then in power, to run it under public ownership.

But the point I want to make here is that one group on the side against this proposition are dead against private ownership of any kind. Whom do these spokesmen for public ownership represent at this moment? We have heard it said, Mr. Chairman, that we have no mandate for this proposition but that they have a mandate. Yet if you look at the record of those who have been elected, Mr. Chairman, you will see that half of them come from one province. I think they have one member from Nova Scotia. They had one member, recently departed, from Ontario