

Trans-Canada Pipe Lines

participated in the debates which culminated in the passage, under closure of course, of the Trans-Canada Pipe Lines bill in June, 1956. As far as we are concerned, we have been quite consistent throughout, consistent in our demand that this line should be built by the government of Canada, not for the Trans-Canada Pipe Lines Company but for the people of Canada; not, as is now the case, for the use and benefit, ultimately of a private corporation.

A moment ago I spoke of the traditions of the Conservative party, and I said we expected them to live up to those traditions upon which, in part, their opposition to the Trans-Canada Pipe Lines bill was, as they themselves said, largely based. Sir John A. Macdonald staked his whole public career on the principle of Canadian control of the fundamentals of Canadian economic existence. He fought in season and out of season and often against what seemed to be hopeless odds to prevent United States companies gaining control of our first trans-continental railway. As early as 1871, according to Professor Creighton's very excellent biography, Macdonald wrote, and I quote him again:

Allan has joined himself with a number of American capitalists and they are applying to the Canadian government to be allowed to build our Pacific railway.

I could just change that a bit and say that certain people of Canada have joined themselves to American capitalists to build a pipe line across Canada with the financial support of the Conservative government of Canada. I will go on with the quotation:

The government, of course, is glad to receive all such applications, as they show an interest in the undertaking and indicate its value, but as yet we have come to no conclusion with respect to it.

Then he adds this:

You may depend upon it—we shall see that Canadian interests are sufficiently protected and no American ring will be allowed to get control over it.

Well, now we have another Conservative government in office with power to prevent what they called a nefarious deal in the summer of 1956, with men whom the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) himself described as "Texan adventurers and buccaneers". But instead of acting as the people of Canada expect them to act, they are shelving the matter by referring it to a royal commission. A royal commission like, sometimes, a committee, is a very convenient way of shelving an awkward problem.

Mr. Broome: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Coldwell: Yes.

Mr. Broome: What would you do? These shares have changed hands; they have been built up in value—

Mr. Coldwell: Very simple. We know exactly what it cost to build the pipe line from the Alberta border to Winnipeg; we are building a pipe line across northern Ontario now and we know exactly what it costs and we own it now. We have the legal means, with appropriate compensation, of expropriating that line that we do not now own for the public good.

Mr. Broome: The people who own these shares are not the original people.

Mr. Coldwell: I have answered the question, that is exactly what I would do, and that is what I think the government should do.

The Conservative party is abdicating both its principles and its responsibility. When buccaneers were raiding their victims in the old days, the ancient authorities did not allow them to plunder their victims in times of peace, but that is exactly what the government of Canada is doing now.

The government has already received a very comprehensive report made for the use of the Borden commission by Mr. John Davis entitled "Canadian Energy Prospects". With this, and the information available to the Department of Trade and Commerce, the government has enough information before it to enable it to act.

A United States commission set up some time ago to lay the basis for the United States federal power commission took four years to make its report. Now, a royal commission may be justifiable in some respects, but long-term energy prospects and control are surely one thing which deserves investigation; but policies with regard to pipe line companies and profiteers are quite another and, again, I may add that it is quite proper to ask the question where Mr. Borden the chairman of the commission is at the present time, and why the commission has not met.

I can also point out that there was no suggestion in the speeches made by members of the Conservative party in 1956 that a royal commission was necessary to review the Trans-Canada Pipe Lines bill. Never at any time was that suggestion made in the hectic and heated debates of May and June, 1956, nor, am I reminded, was any such suggestion made during the entire general election. Powerful United States companies still retain a considerable amount of control over the Trans-Canada pipe line. We do not know what the government's position is now regarding the export of gas as a result of tying Trans-Canada to its associates in the United States. It is likely we shall find the same