

*Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation*

That is one of the most significant statements, Mr. Chairman, despite what the member for Parkdale may say, that has yet been made in the house. "I do not know". In effect he says, "I do not know why we are ramming this down the throats of members of this house". Then he went on to say:

—perhaps I get overenthusiastic . . .

Well, Mr. Chairman, I have no objection whatsoever to enthusiasm. I get enthusiastic myself, and I think each and every one of us does. But I suggest that overenthusiasm is just as bad a fault and in many cases worse than a negative approach. It leads to trouble. Here we are with a bill on which debate has been closed off at every opportunity. There have been no second looks, and I suggest that second looks are often advisable, even for the omnipotent and all-powerful Minister of Trade and Commerce.

It was possible some weeks ago, Mr. Chairman, to have an honest and open examination before a committee of the provisions of the resolution and the bill. I admit that because of the tactics that have been followed by the government that is no longer possible. But we should at least have such answers as the Minister of Trade and Commerce can give us, and we should have those answers given to us here. I refer to another statement made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce found at page 4404 of *Hansard* of May 28, where he is reported as saying:

I have spoken three times in this debate—

—You will recall what he did on each and every occasion when he spoke.

—and my purpose in rising now is to attempt to make this a committee where questions that are asked can be answered.

**Mr. Fulton:** And he is not even here tonight.

**Mr. Mitchell (London):** Mr. Chairman, I suggest that he has not answered the questions. In fact, one of the amusing things is that the only question he answered he answered incorrectly. At page 4475 of *Hansard* of May 30 I find these words of the minister:

I have a correction that has to do with the figures I gave on the cost of gas.

That is the only time he has intervened to answer any questions that have been posed to him during the course of the debate. You say: All right, what questions have been asked that he has not answered? I refer you to the remarks which were made by the hon. member for St. Paul's. I refer you to the questions which were asked by the member for Peel. I refer you to the remarks which were made by the member for Spadina. All I can say, Mr. Chairman, is that with the exception of this one time when the minister

[Mr. Mitchell (London).]

intervened to correct a misstatement he had made, the minister has not deigned to answer the questions which have been posed to him.

I now propose to refer to some remarks made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce last session. During a somewhat similar debate I made some reference to the unemployment and farm relief act, which has also been referred to during the course of this debate. The minister interposed during the course of my remarks to say, as found at page 5028 of *Hansard* of June 20, 1955:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure my hon. friend would like to amplify a little. I do not recognize the legislation. Was that the blank cheque legislation?

Subsequently, Mr. Chairman, on the next occasion when I had the honour to be addressing the house the minister again referred to that remark to which I replied, as found at page 5796 of *Hansard* of July 6, 1955:

Referring to blank cheques, what could be more of a blank cheque than this present legislation?

At that time, Mr. Chairman, I had no idea just how far the present Minister of Trade and Commerce would go. Standing here tonight I am reminded of a musical that I have enjoyed witnessing and listening to on many occasions but which has now ceased to have the same enjoyment for me because it contains a certain song I would love to sing but for lack of voice will not do so. The words are, "He's gone about as far as he can go." The present minister has certainly gone about as far as he can go; but who knows, apparently there are no limits to the arrogance and the imagination of the person who holds that portfolio at the present time. I say further that, politically speaking, the government has not only gone about as far as it can go. It has gone as far as it can go.

What about this blank cheque? I propose to examine what are the normal requirements of a cheque. No. 1 is the date. We have before us a cheque in the form of a bill, a bill which is placed before us for signature. The only definite thing about that bill is its date. Usually the person drawing the cheque, namely this parliament, has something to say about the date. This cheque was dated long before it was ever placed before the drawer for consideration. The payee came to the government with a gun in its hand and said "either or else". I want to know what vicious circumstances lie behind the fact that the government has the unmitigated gall to bring to parliament for signature a cheque which was dated long in advance of the time we had any opportunity to consider it.

The tragedy of the matter is that the drawer is dying in the process, and only the future will tell how bad indeed was this cheque. The drawer will die of the fetters that