

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

which this pipe line is to pass. It is not passing through a populous area where there will be many offshoots along the line. That company is financing that privately. For that very reason the considerations in that case are very different from the considerations that we should bear in mind in discussing the subject now before us.

The minister has said that it has now become improbable that financial arrangements can be carried out by May 1. That, of course, is perfectly obvious and is recognized. The result is that we are being asked to give this minister another blank cheque—

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Drew: I hear one of the hon. members opposite say "Hear, hear". The hon. members opposite are quite ready to give a blank cheque to a minister who has shown how improper it is to give him uncontrolled powers.

An hon. Member: They do what they are told.

Mr. Drew: They, of course, have been told by the same minister at a meeting here in Ottawa that it is appropriate for them to follow instructions whenever they are given. They have been told it is proper to toe the party line, and I regret that there is some indication they are going to follow those instructions on this occasion.

Mr. Knowles: And now they must toe the party pipe line.

Mr. Drew: It is perfectly clear that, when the government talks about hastening this development, it has no idea when it can go ahead. We want action, and we want to make it perfectly clear what is before this house. This is one of the most remarkable proposals ever made to the Canadian House of Commons. We are asked to declare by this motion:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the constitution of the corporation to be known as the Northern Ontario Pipe Line Crown Corporation . . .

It is then proposed in the resolution that this crown corporation be set up for the purposes of:

. . . constructing, maintaining and operating a natural gas pipe line between the Ontario-Manitoba border and Kapuskasing . . .

It is further to have the power to lease this pipe line to Trans-Canada Pipe Lines Limited, with an option to purchase. All this means in simple terms—and I address these remarks particularly to the members opposite—that we are being asked to set up a crown corporation which will use public funds to assist

financial interests in the United States in establishing effective control over one of our major resources. I doubt if there is any precedent for such a proposal. Can anyone recall any case where any other government actually put up money to help financial interests control their own resources in this way? I ask hon. members opposite if any one of them thinks that the congress of the United States would for a moment give serious consideration to a proposal that they use money of the American taxpayers to complete financial arrangements for some Canadian company to take control over resources of the United States. There is not an hon. member of this house who does not know that they would be laughed out of congress if they made any such suggestion. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that a proposal of this kind should be laughed out of the house. Unless any hon. member is prepared to say that he thinks the government of the United States would do this in the case of a Canadian company, then let him examine his conscience before he is prepared to say that it is expedient that we should do this here.

Mr. Pickersgill: What about the Grand Trunk Western?

An hon. Member: What about the Alaska highway?

Mr. Drew: Let us keep in mind exactly what is before us and certainly not pay any attention to the interpolations that have just been made.

An hon. Member: You asked a question.

Mr. Drew: This is a project to assure government ownership of part and only part of the gas pipe line. When the minister talks about preferring this to government ownership he seems to forget that he is asking us to approve of government ownership. That is what this motion is, but it is government ownership of a hybrid form and with a strange purpose.

All Canadians want this pipe line built. I am not in any doubt about that. Alberta has natural gas to sell, vast quantities of it, and Ontario and Quebec want that gas. A line should have been built long ago and would have been built if it had not been for the fumbling, bumbling and confusion of this government. This company was incorporated by a bill in this house in 1951, five years ago. Hon. members who were here at that time will remember the impatience of the minister when there was some delay in passing the bill. The government wanted action right away. Their chosen instrument must be assisted and allowed to go ahead five years