

at every inch of the progress of that pipeline. It seems to me the government has done the right thing in accepting that suggestion, advanced by us in the first instance.

An hon. Member: Why do you not cross the floor?

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, if I had crossed the floor as some members of the NDP suggests, we would have the bill in its original form and not in the improved form it is in now.

If the special standing committee on northern pipelines meets on a quarterly basis, we can assure that the terms of the agreement reached by our two countries are actually being achieved. The important additional responsibilities of that committee in its review process would be to review all the activities of the agencies, the boards, the designated officers and the agreements that are made, as well as the regulations that I am sure will be made by the hundreds. The government has agreed to establish that committee for the purposes of review.

With respect to the argument about financial backstopping, I think that is the most specious and empty argument I have heard from anyone familiar with the parliamentary process. There is no provision in this bill whatsoever which imposes a charge on the taxpayers of Canada. In order for that to happen, an amendment would have to be made to the bill. The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie knows that very well. There is no need for us now to write in a negative provision in the bill to prevent that. If we reach that stage—which I do not expect to happen—the government would be bound to bring in a proposed amendment to the bill to permit backstopping. That is simply not going to happen.

Some 22 amendments to this bill were proposed in committee. Half of them were disposed of by the concession of the government in accepting the proposition to set up a parliamentary review process. Among the rest were some major amendments, such as setting up a monitoring process to be carried out by the committee that will be formed and relating to the complete absence of a native presence in the bill. The government has accepted in part our suggestions with respect to writing the native population affected into the bill. We had very serious reservations with respect to the judicial process. The government has literally accepted all of our recommendations with respect to those amendments.

There is something I cannot understand, however. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) sat in on most of those meetings, agreed with every one of the amendments we presented, and agreed that they would achieve the objectives that his party is now attempting to achieve by these sham amendments—for that is what they are—for the purpose, I can only conjecture, of impressing the media.

The parliamentary review process that we have from the government now by way of a commitment is the very kind of guarantee we want. It will insist upon the implementation of the admirable objectives set out in the agreement.

An hon. Member: Go over there.

An hon. Member: Join them.

Northern Pipeline

Mr. Nielsen: Hon. members tell me to go over to the other side, Mr. Speaker. I wonder which member over there will receive a telephone call from Premier Blakeney tomorrow telling him not to obstruct any more.

Their amendments are unacceptable. They are empty, they are specious, they are unnecessary, primarily because we have achieved the only practicable, workable solution with respect to seeing to it that the government lives up to its intentions and that the company lives up to its intentions by the monitoring process. This amendment to our Standing Orders will set up a committee of elected representatives of the people who will accept their responsibility.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn) is indicating that he wishes to ask a question. He can do so only if it is accepted by the hon. member who has the floor. Will the hon. member accept a question?

Mr. Nielsen: Certainly.

Mr. Blackburn: Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask one question of the hon. member for the Yukon. I assume he is well aware of the importance of this project in his part of the country. I think he gave the speech that he has just made a few weeks ago. The hon. member is talking about guarantees. Perhaps we should not have guarantees that it should be a competitive market situation.

• (2132)

I would like to ask the hon. member for Yukon if he knows or is aware of the fact that the steel industries and steel manufacturing concerns in Japan and Italy, to name two countries, are very heavily subsidized by their respective governments. When the bidding is being done for these contracts, is it possible for this House and this government to find out just how much public funds from those countries will be put into those contracts and those bids before those bids are placed. That is the crucial point. In Canada we can find out if there is any government subsidy with Stelco or Ipsco and so on, but I want to find out if there is any possible means, of which the member is aware right now, by which we can find out in this country how much subsidy is given to the Japanese steel manufacturers and the Italian steel manufacturers so that they might just possibly underbid our own steel pipeline manufacturers.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, that question is very quickly and easily answered. I know the hon. member did not attend the committee meetings; he probably had other responsibilities. But if he read the committee reports and the bill he will see that the minister and the agency have the broadest possible powers with respect to the contracts that are let. Every agreement entered into must be submitted to the minister. Every agreement that is submitted to the minister must be submitted to the committee that is to be set up. It will not all happen at once, this project will take several years. So there will be an ongoing review by the elected representatives sitting in this