

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

chess board as a pawn in the game of a group of private financiers who are not interested in getting gas into the towns of Saskatchewan or Manitoba and who are not interested in getting gas into Ontario or Quebec. They are interested only in the profit they might make out of our gas and our taxpayers' money. That is the reason that we in Winnipeg, with the experiences we have had in the past, anxious as we are to have a pipe line built—and perhaps we are more anxious than anybody else because of where we are situated with respect to the line that is supposed to be built this summer; indeed it was promised for last summer—despite our anxiety we realize that this is a bad deal and that we should demand something better.

But, Mr. Chairman, we do not believe that it is necessary to wait for something better. We believe that a better way can be entered upon this summer just as readily as can this plan which is proposed by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. We say that this plan which the Minister of Trade and Commerce is trying to bulldoze through this parliament is one that is almost sure to fail. He practically admitted that himself in his speech yesterday. He referred time and time again to what would happen if the company were to fail, and talked in terms of the government taking over as if it were almost a certainty that was what would happen. If the plan succeeds we will be at the mercy, in Canada, of a private monopoly controlled by financiers mainly foreign, and a monopoly that will not be interested in getting gas to the consumers of this country at a reasonable price. They will be interested only in the profit they can make out of the project and our consumers will be charged the limit. If they fail, the project will end up under public ownership. Someone says, is that not what you want? Why do you not go along with this plan and get public ownership that way? We want public ownership, but we want to come at it directly and honestly, not indirectly and dishonestly.

Furthermore, we know from our history and experience in this country that when the government takes over an outfit that has defaulted and become bankrupt, far too often there are financial arrangements made that set up a capitalization that provides a false picture for years to come and the people really do not get the value out of public ownership which they get when we go in for it first, directly and honestly as we propose. So, Mr. Chairman, we say that the time for action on this question is now, this year, 1956. We are not fooled and the people of Canada are not fooled by the assertion made by the Minister

of Trade and Commerce that if he does not let this private company do it he cannot get it done until 1958. The minister does not know his own strength, his own power, his own capabilities for organization. This minister organized Trans-Canada Air Lines and the Polymer Corporation at Sarnia.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Knowles: This minister, whom the Liberals are so happy to applaud, knows very well that if he would shake off these shackles that are blinding him to the possibilities of public ownership he could do something for Canada with respect to this great national project that would be a star in his crown far brighter than any of the others that his Liberal colleagues like to boast about when they are singing his praises.

Yesterday the Minister of Trade and Commerce said that we could not get going with this proposition unless we put it in the hands of this favoured company, Trans-Canada Pipe Lines Limited. I am not sure that it will be done even if we put it in their hands. We still have not got a clear statement from the minister as to what are the terms of the option this company has on the pipe that is still in the United States. I asked him as recently as 2.30 this afternoon whether he had yet obtained a copy of the option, and the answer was no. Yesterday he told us the option was being altered. Here we are within four hours of a vote forced upon parliament by this dictatorial government and we still do not know who has this pipe or whether the option is any good at all. So, Mr. Chairman, I ask you to note the attempt that the government is making not only to bulldoze us but to force this thing through without our having all the facts that are involved.

I say to the minister that if this company is in the position that he says it is to proceed with this project this summer it is only because of the favours the company has received from this government and the constant extensions it has received from the government and the board of transport commissioners; it is only in that position because of the loan that is involved in this proposition now before us and of the proposal by the government to build the line through northern Ontario for this private company.

If this company, as I say, is in this favoured position because of what the government has done for it then the government owes it to the people of Canada to take over that company now and start building this project for the people of Canada, a trans-Canada pipe line across western Canada and completed to Winnipeg before this year is out. The Minister of Trade and Commerce