

Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation

Production Act which fortunately was defeated. That has been not only the government's actual activities but their attitude. The famous expression of the Minister of Trade and Commerce, "Who's going to stop us?" has become all too familiar in this house and elsewhere.

It may be all very well for the Minister of Trade and Commerce, the hon. member for Waterloo North and many other hon. members on the other side. These men are capable businessmen—no one would question that statement—and very able men. But running parliament is a different thing from running a grain elevator business or a meat packing business or whatever it might be. These men do not appreciate the difference between running the House of Commons and running a business.

They seem to have forgotten—if they ever knew—what the principles and traditions of parliament really are. If any of them ever knew them or understood them, they seem to have forgotten those principles long ago. The singing of songs in this house by hon. members of the Liberal party, while the government went about its evil business of attempting to destroy parliament, could only be likened to the fiddling by the Roman emperor Nero while the city of Rome burned around him. It has seemed to me that most of the hon. members who were doing all the singing had just about as little appreciation of what was going on or what was happening to our parliamentary democracy. Hon. members opposite must wake up, as I mentioned the other day, to this not so thin edge of the wedge and repudiate quite frankly—I hesitate to use the word but I cannot think of any more suitable one—this vile perversion of democracy. The so-called Liberal party is just about as "liberal" as are the "people's democratic" parties of the iron curtain countries. They are neither "people's" nor "democratic".

The rather shocking proposal presented by the Prime Minister the day before yesterday was certainly something that should not or could not be accepted by any hon. member who believed in parliamentary democracy. If reports that we hear on this side of the house are correct, we understand that the Prime Minister yesterday or possibly the day before was asked by members of his own party to take a greater part in debate. We have now seen some evidence of his doing that since then and we are glad to have the Prime Minister taking his part again in the house. It seems a pity, however, that so far in this debate the only things we have heard from the Prime Minister are threats and announcements of the continued demolition

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

of the structure of democratic government. I cannot help feeling that personally these statements must be extremely distasteful to the Prime Minister himself. Just to show how far this country has gone along the road to becoming a one-party state, the government is now attempting to push this offensive bill through the other place in one day. Ordinarily such a bill—

Mr. Harris: Order. The hon. member cannot talk about what happens in the other place.

Mr. Nesbitt: Ordinarily the passage would take somewhat longer. I should like to make some comment in this regard which I do not believe is out of order.

Mr. Fulton: It has not happened yet. You can talk about the Senate. The only thing you cannot do is to reflect upon what happens there.

Mr. Nesbitt: As a result of some of the comments I have heard to which I pay some attention, since I do not wish to be out of order, may I say this. When this bill comes before the other place, if the other place is not completely supine let the other place show the people of Canada that it is an independent body and that it performs some function. For years, Mr. Chairman, we have heard demands for the abolition of the other place on the ground that it performs no useful function. The other place now has its chance to prove its merits.

Here we have just about the most contentious piece of legislation in Canadian history. If the other place allows this legislation to go through in one day, the arguments for abolition are fully justified. On the other hand if the other place, despite its almost complete composition of government members, illustrates its independence and carries on debate despite the government orders, it will have fully justified its existence before the people of Canada for many years to come. It will have shown that it is not a rubber stamp and that it is performing its practical function, its traditional function of sober consideration of ill-considered, ill-framed and ill-advised legislation that is being hastily pushed through this very house.

Members of this party have been accused from time to time in this debate of not using their time at this stage of the legislation to ask a greater number of questions respecting the pipe line itself. Mr. Chairman, I have a question I would like to have answered, and I would like to have the Minister of Trade and Commerce answer it.

Mr. Hamilton (York West): He probably will not be able to answer it.