

which motion 2 seeks to amend, states in the bill that the minister may:

oversee and survey all aspects of the planning and construction of, and procurement for, the pipeline;—

We know, of course, the minister alone will not be overseeing these various aspects. He would have assisting him a committee made up of departmental officials seconded from the department of energy or any other government department, composed of people who are already on staff. Therefore, it would not require additional funds to hire them. That is the context in which we have used the word "committee"; it is a group of civil servants to assist the minister to ensure that there will be no price fixing in the bids submitted. In that sense I do not see that there would be any necessity for extra expenditure of funds. This would not be a parliamentary committee but merely an administrative committee to advise the minister, made up of people who are already on staff.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Yukon is rising on a procedural point?

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member for Sault Ste. Marie did not attend any of the meetings of the special committee set up to study this bill. It is also unfortunate the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands is not here tonight, though I am sure he is engaged in other serious business elsewhere. He would have been able to explain to the House that the amendment proposed in motion No. 2 has been covered by an undertaking given by the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council in the committee to amend Standing Order 65(1) so as to set up the very kind of committee of which he speaks and for which he seeks an amendment. It would be a continuation of the special committee set up to examine the bill. The minister's undertaking in the committee was in these words:

● (2022)

That Standing Order 65(1) be amended by adding immediately after subsection (s), the following: "(t)—

This would set up a special standing committee on northern pipelines to accomplish the very objectives contained in motion No. 2.

—On Northern Pipelines, to consist of not more than 15 members, to which shall stand permanently referred all reports, orders, agreements, regulations, directions and approvals mentioned in sections 12, 13, 14, 15 and 22 of the Northern Pipeline Act; provided that the said committee shall report quarterly thereon in every session."

Provided that this subsection shall be deleted from the Standing Orders on the day on which the Northern Pipeline Agency ceases to exist.

That is not the final wording. The Deputy Prime Minister is still considering our suggestion with regard to reporting on a quarterly basis or once every four months. We are very close to agreement on that score. That is the kind of procedure that would avoid the pitfalls into which the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie falls in suggesting an amendment along the lines that he has in motion No. 2 which offends the provisions with regard to public expenditures.

Northern Pipeline

I say to the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie that his motion is unnecessary. We have a commitment from the government and an undertaking from the minister that that committee will be set up to ensure that the very admirable intent spelled out in the international agreement between the two countries is adhered to with regard to Canadian labour, goods and materials—Canadian content in general. That and other very important aspects will be monitored by that committee which the minister and the government have undertaken to set up.

Mr. Symes: After the fact.

Mr. Nielsen: I hear the interjection of the hon. member. It will not be after the fact. It will be on a continuing basis in the committee.

This is a unique experience in the history of this House as long as I have been here. A standing committee is being set up to monitor a piece of legislation about which there is understandably deep concern with regard to the achievement of the terms of the international agreement, particularly those with regard to Canadian content.

We are satisfied with the minister's undertaking, satisfied with the government's commitment and satisfied that that committee will be able to accomplish the purpose of ensuring that the Canadian content provisions will be adhered to.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I first wish to note that the hon. member for Yukon made mention of the fact that the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie had not been at any meetings of the special committee. That is quite correct. The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie was not a member of that committee. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands was our representative on that committee throughout its sessions. He happens to be away now and his place is being taken at this stage of the debate by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie. Nothing much turns on it, but I thought it was an unnecessary reference by the hon. member for Yukon.

As to his point about the commitment made by the Deputy Prime Minister to introduce an amendment to the Standing Orders, I suggest that does not have anything to do with the procedural admissibility of the amendment in motion No. 2. I also want to point out that they are two different concepts altogether, namely the establishing of a standing committee of the House of Commons to monitor what goes on with regard to the northern gas pipeline and an internal departmental committee that checks on purchases to make sure there is no price fixing and so on.

It is not good enough for the hon. member for Yukon to say that the committee which the Deputy Prime Minister will ask the House to set up can do that job. We do not know when parliament will be sitting. We do not know when that committee will be able to do its job. There are bound to be times when the government will be making purchases or letting contracts when parliament is not even here or when the committee is not sitting.