

Trans-Alaska Pipeline

ests me. The minister answered that no such representations had been made. I asked that a motion be made, and that is why we have a debate today. I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether he would accept a motion from Parliament stating our objections to the TAPS oil tanker route and the concern of Canadians in this respect. I will read my question as it appears at page 3914 of *Hansard* of March 3:

I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. Since he is also responsible for external affairs, it will have a double effect. In light of the enormous ecological implications of the TAPS oil tanker route, will the government consider presenting a motion in Parliament to enable the whole Parliament of Canada to express Canada's insistence of full bilateral discussions and the frank recognition of Canada's interest in an ecologically satisfactory transport system?

• (3:30 p.m.)

The government did not want to accept a motion or to draft one in this regard, and so today we have a debate. I know this debate will be profitable because it allows the expression of points of view by many hon. members. But even after the speeches of the two ministers who have taken part in the debate—and I do not anticipate that any more ministers will speak—we still have not been told the Canadian government's position on this aspect of the matter. As I said a minute ago, today we find that consultations have not even begun in this area and no notice has been given of when talks will begin. As has been pointed out by some hon. members, pipe is already in Alaska ready to be placed in position—but we have not started consultations. This demonstrates the lack of interest displayed by the Canadian government.

I can see why the government has not started consultations. It is because the government has not yet decided what it wants. Last year the government made a big showing of its stand against pollution, as mentioned by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien). He stated that Parliament had passed many pieces of legislation dealing with pollution. This is true. He also stated that ecological studies had been undertaken. This is also true. But we have not yet been able to find the answers to the problem—and it is an urgent problem at this point.

A couple of weeks ago when the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Laing) was Acting Prime Minister, in reply to a question he said that government departments are studying the threat to the ecology which could be presented by a pipeline running through Canada. But we still do not know the position of the government. We still do not have the results of all the studies that have been carried out.

[Translation]

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development spoke this afternoon about the studies made by his department. I do not know how long the minister has been in charge of his department, but he should certainly look after the North, and if he really does look after its interests, he should at least state the department's position on this matter. He did not do so. He talked about what his department had done, but not about what he, as

[Mr. Comeau.]

Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and protector of the North, wanted done. He simply talked about a few small things his department and the government have done. He did not reveal the attitude of his department, which is really involved in this problem.

[English]

He has stated it is very easy for a member to get information on the position of the government. He has stated that guidelines have been issued. These things are true, Mr. Speaker; guidelines have been issued—but we still have not been told the Canadian government's position on this whole topic. Therefore I ask: Is it the policy of the government to oppose the TAPS oil tanker route as being ecologically too dangerous, and has the government expressed this opposition in a formal way to the Americans?

We do not know what the government has proposed to the Americans. This afternoon the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources told us some of the things his department has done, but he did not state the government's position. We do not know how much bargaining the government has done on this whole subject. If it is the type of bargaining it has undertaken in other matters, then I would imagine it has been very scanty.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources referred to an article in this morning's *Globe and Mail*. I quote the first paragraph of it:

Putting all oil and gas pipelines from the north of the continent in a single corridor through Canada would have "much less environmental impact" than if pipelines are built both through Alaska and Canada, U.S. Interior Secretary Rogers Morton said yesterday.

That report comes from Washington; it does not come from Canada. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior thinks it would be appropriate for oil companies to talk to the Canadian government about a Canadian route—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret having to interrupt the hon. member, but his time expired about a minute ago.

Mr. David Anderson (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to take part in a debate on this topic. I only wish, however, that the wording of the resolution were a little more precise and had been thought out a little better. One might say it is a pious resolution, one which is careless in its wording and in some respects naïve. I say this because on the one hand it is asking government to take a position opposing one form of transport and at the same time it is suggesting—statements made since the debate began have supported this view—that we should encourage another type. The point I wish to make is the same point I have been making for some months now. Indeed, it is now a year since I first spoke on the west coast tanker route problem, and my point was then and is now that the information on both routes is quite inadequate for proper decision-making.

First let me deal with the western route, that is, Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, and Valdez to the lower 48 states. A certain part of this route has been studied,