

*Northern Pipeline*

That is just as true now as when the hon. Leader of the Opposition uttered it on August 4.

What did the government do when it knew the United States had to make a decision as to whether the Prudhoe Bay oil should be transported by the Alyeska route, via the El Paso route, or via the Mackenzie valley route? The government knew well in advance that some mode of transportation was required to move that oil. It fiddled and fumbled about. Finally in approximately 1972 the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) made an announcement on the eve of an election, which was coincidental, that a \$100 million Mackenzie highway was going to be constructed. The intention of the government in making that announcement which, incidentally, was verified by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), was to induce the American decision to move that oil down the Mackenzie. Unfortunately, they fiddled so long that the day after they made the announcement the United States government announced that it was going to be the Alyeska route.

● (1632)

What happened after all sorts of clearing and grubbing had been done prior to the announcement by the Canadian government was that they abandoned the route, similar to an earlier abandonment. The then prime minister accused the Diefenbaker government, in which the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) was minister of northern affairs, of spending money like drunken sailors on the Dempster Highway. So in 1963 construction was stopped. It was the vision of the government of that day, which did not foresee what was going to happen at Prudhoe Bay and what was going to happen in the Delta and in the Yukon where we are now active again in the Eagle Plain and the Peel Plateau. So they cut it off. Then as soon as Prudhoe Bay was discovered, bingo, they were right on the ball again, and they started building the Dempster Highway. That was some vision! It is a tired, bankrupt government which comes to that kind of conclusion. It is a government of reaction instead of action.

**Mr. Foster:** I thought you would be more charitable today.

**Mr. Nielsen:** I would like to hear the interventions, but with this new electronic control we have in this chamber one does not enjoy the full exchange we used to enjoy and which used to make debates much more exciting. Now members are shut off by a button. We operate like electronically controlled puppets.

One of the truly great bargaining factors which could have been discussed by the minister when he negotiated this agreement with the Americans is that the Yukon has some six million horsepower in hydroelectric potential which is run by a Crown corporation. The hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) will say more about the nature of that corporation and its habit of sitting on its backside through most developments of this nature. I might add that it is still there.

Six million horsepower is capable of development by reversing the flow of the Yukon River watershed under the plan known as the Taiya project. If such a project went ahead—and it was proposed to the Liberal government of the day in

[Mr. Nielsen.]

1953—it would require the development of industrial sites on the Panhandle, which is United States soil. I recall that we negotiated away, albeit in terms of an urgent situation, 99-year leases, several of them in Newfoundland, and those leases are still extant in Newfoundland. Why could the minister not have negotiated on behalf of the Canadian people a corridor through the Panhandle for the purpose of that kind of hydroelectric development, twice that of the St. Lawrence Seaway project as it now exists? It would have provided all the power needed for the near future. It would have provided power for export to the rest of Canada, with our present knowledge of transmission lines. Why could Canadian industrial sites not have been negotiated as part of this package, in view of the fact that the minister has described it in terms of such magnitude? That is one of the areas he could have negotiated. Perhaps we were shoved down the tube, and I mean all Canadians, not just those in the Yukon.

The minister gave some figures with respect to Delta Gas. I rather doubt those figures. It does not seem to me that they are in accord with those which were given in evidence both before the Berger and Lysyk inquiries. However, I am prepared to be corrected on that. I am told, though, that whatever is in the Delta now is not sufficiently commercial to permit its transportation at this stage nor, indeed, at the completion of this line in 1983.

I have said that we intend to introduce a measure in committee which hopefully will be accepted by the government. That was suggested by our leader in his speech on August 4. He suggested that parliamentary input should be the responsibility of the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works. He said we should have a continuing right to monitor the pipeline question. That can be found at page 8040 of *Hansard* for that date. My leader also urged the government to bring in the legislation not later than last fall. We will be proposing that the monitoring process be on a quarterly basis. It might well be that that standing committee is not the proper forum for that.

I do not think hon. members on this side would argue that there should not be monitoring to ensure that the intentions expressed in the agreement are carried out. It may well be that the government will accept the proposition that the committee which has been set up to study the provisions of this bill should be the instrument by which we can achieve that monitoring. However, I seriously suggest that monitoring is the right of parliament and of the people of Canada.

The minister spoke about the advantages to the Yukon at some length, and I am very happy he did. It is not my purpose to confine my remarks to the Yukon simply because I represent that vast area. It is my responsibility to put forward the position of this party on a national basis, which I intend to do, but the minister did make some fairly wild statements about Yukon procurement, Yukon labour content, and the like. I do not find any such provisions in the bill. I may again be mistaken, but I have studied the bill fairly carefully, and I do not find that there.