

Interim Supply

formality and he would be back in the house. What happened to him?

The Chairman: Order, may I inform the hon. member that the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, my sole purpose in taking part in the debate is to express the hope that we can bring a speedy end to this debate on interim supply.

Mr. Churchill: May I ask the hon. member a question on this point? Is the hon. member aware that we are just waiting for the Minister of National Revenue to come back and answer a question which was asked on orders of the day and then, within a few minutes, we are prepared to bring this debate to a conclusion? The Minister of National Revenue is holding everything up.

Mr. Douglas: If the Minister of National Revenue is going to make a statement and then the debate is to be concluded, I am quite prepared to forgo the privilege of taking part in the debate. However, I wish to say that I think interim supply presents the opposition parties with a very real opportunity to express views which they have not had the chance of presenting. We in the New Democratic Party, when the interim supply matter was raised, took the opportunity to present the whole matter of the Trans-Canada Pipe Lines application to build a pipe line through the United States. We had no other opportunity to discuss that matter.

The Prime Minister had agreed from time to time that we would have an opportunity to discuss it but the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, without reference to parliament, tabled an agreement approving this application by Trans-Canada Pipe Lines. We, therefore, felt that it was only right and proper that this matter should get a thorough airing. There is no doubt that as a result of that debate one thing has become abundantly clear, namely, that there is no national fuel policy in Canada. It is now perfectly clear that three years ago the National Energy Board recognized the need for twinning the lines in northern Ontario, that nothing was done by the government, and that the National Energy Board had no authority to do anything.

The hon. member for Qu'Appelle, in speaking with some pride of the fact that this legislation was passed by the Conservative government, referred to the National Energy Board as being an office of records. Events

[Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South).]

have proven that this is all it is, an office of records. It had no authority to compel the twinning of that line, with the result that we now have the situation where the government can claim that there will be a shortage of gas in southern Ontario. Since they can build the line through the United States faster, the government can claim this project should be proceeded with rather than the twinning of the northern line.

All of this demonstrates the lack of planning and the lack of any national fuel policy. We therefore feel that we were completely justified in raising this matter as we did. We have expressed our views on it, and we are certain that time will vindicate the position we have taken. As a matter of fact, if the Federal Power Commission in Washington does not approve this agreement, we will be back where we started. We will then have to twin the northern line after having wasted a considerable number of years in planning and discussing this project. However, having made our protest we are not going to hold up the estimates and we have not taken much part in the debate in recent days.

The other matter which has been raised in the house by the Conservative members is in regard to unification. Our view on it was expressed in one speech by the hon. member for Greenwood who pointed out that we need to have facts before we can intelligently cast a vote with respect to unification. We need to know what is the government's concept of Canada's military role in the present day world.

We should have the views of experienced military men who are both for and against the unification program. We need to know whether the proposed unification will give the Canadian people, to use an American expression, a better bang for a buck, and whether we will get a better defence system for the \$1,600 million a year which we are spending on national defence. We, in this party, have supported the official opposition in their argument that there is a good deal of merit in sending the subject matter of the national defence bill to a committee so that both those who are for it and those who are against it may give testimony upon which we can make an intelligent judgment. I am sorry the government has not acceded to what I consider to be a very reasonable request.

• (4:20 p.m.)

If the unification proposal has merit, surely it should be possible to defend it in committee. If it is defended effectively then, certainly, our party will give its approval to it. If it