

maritimes would begin in 1983 and that it would reach Halifax by 1986. However, this timetable requires adjustment due to the fact that current labour difficulties have plagued the Quebec portion of the line and escalated costs by millions of dollars. TQ and M has also experienced problems related to route selection and delays in obtaining provincial government approval. It should be noted that only recently the government of New Brunswick appointed a distributor for natural gas and no distributor has yet been named in Nova Scotia.

On the matter of project scheduling I would like to report that the company is planning for a full construction season, employing a fully integrated work force. Contracts planned to be awarded in coming weeks will be completed in accordance with the company's planning schedule. TQ and M expects contractors working for it to hire as many people as they foresaw initially.

The previously announced economic spin-offs of the pipeline project still stand, a point which should be of particular interest to the people of the maritimes considering the very positive economic opportunities that can be reaped by entrepreneurs in that region of the country.

In conclusion I would just like to express the government's satisfaction with TQ and M's prediction that the upcoming construction season will be very productive. However, there have been delays caused by labour disputes in Quebec and delays in the appointment of gas distributors in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

THE ECONOMY—HEARINGS CONDUCTED IN MONTREAL BY  
GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND SUPPORTERS. (B)  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South):** Mr. Speaker, on May 18 I raised certain questions with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) with reference to what has been known in the past as "the Gang of Ten". You will recall that questions were raised today, Mr. Speaker, about the "Gang of Fifteen" or was it "the Gang of Seventeen", operating out of Toronto.

The issue I raised was the issue with respect to ministerial responsibility. When a person who is a Member of Parliament becomes a minister of the Crown, that person takes an oath to act on behalf of the Crown in a capacity that is different from that of an ordinary Member of Parliament. They become part of cabinet or government as distinct from Parliament. As members of the government they are responsible for explaining government policy to the country. What has happened is that this government has caused real distress and concern throughout the country. We have the spectre of the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) saying the budget is a political disaster. We have the spectre of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) saying that the employment program of the government is a disaster. We have the spectacle of the minister for Hochelaga-Maisonville (Mr. Joyal)—and I call him that because he does not really have any other job. He is the minister for one riding, and I do not know of any other government which appointed a minister responsible for one constituency. However, the minister, otherwise known as a minister

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of state, says he is going to conduct public hearings into the budget and economic policies of the government. All this creates a climate of uncertainty and puts the government's entire fiscal stance in disrepute. We have all this simply because members of the government make statements that they think the policies are wrong, there will be changes, and they create an uncertainty we cannot live with.

● (2210)

I happen to believe, Mr. Speaker, that some of the things those three ministers have stated are correct, but that does not absolve them as ministers from the obligation in our parliamentary system to resign if they think the government is wrong. That, Sir, is why I raised the question. The answer from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was that ministers have to respect the policies of the government, but that the ministers I mentioned are involved in consultation. Well, Sir, what these ministers are involved in is not consultation. It is, rather, active criticism of the policies of this government.

**Mr. Corbett:** Confrontation.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** My colleague says "confrontation" and I agree. The government speaks out of both sides of its mouth. A minister goes into his riding and says one thing to his constituents, and then goes to a cabinet meeting and affirms something entirely different. It creates the feeling that we cannot depend on the government or ministers of the Crown to give us honest and straightforward answers on where they and the government stand. We are entitled to those straightforward answers, and if the Minister of National Health and Welfare honestly believes we should have make-work programs to put people back to work, then she should say so, but not as the Minister of National Health and Welfare. She should resign. But as a private member of this Parliament of Canada representing her constituents she should make those statements and force the government to change its policies. But she cannot sit as a member of the cabinet and support the budget and the economic thrust of the government and at the same time go around the city of Montreal and travel across the country generally and say that changes should be made. The same thing applies to the Solicitor General and to the Minister of State (Mr. Joyal). There is nothing wrong with Members of Parliament, who are Liberal members who honestly believe that their government is not doing what it should do, making advocacy statements, but when a member becomes a minister of the Crown that Member of Parliament loses his or her freedom as an ordinary member and becomes a minister of the Crown of the government. There is a fine but very important distinction there.

● (2215)

This government has lost its sense of responsibility. The Prime Minister has lost his capacity to govern the country. He fails to recognize that ministers in his cabinet have an obligation at all times to support every one of the government policies. If they fail to do that, they have an obligation to give