

Alberta Natural Gas Company

really had no intention of speaking on a subject. At any rate, it is some evidence of the truth of what I say that I have waited a long time before venturing to take part in this discussion. Certainly during the early weeks of the debate I thought it was something that I could very well leave to other people. I thought it was a matter which primarily concerned the people of British Columbia and Alberta, and I acted on that belief for a considerable time. The principal reason, more than any other, why I am on my feet, is that as time has gone on I have come to have a very uncomfortable feeling that this bill was not exactly what it seemed, that it was not as private as it looked, and that whether or not it was a government bill one might at least describe it as a "Howe" bill.

It has been stated in effect without contradiction in this house that it was a government bill. That has not been denied. As I say, certainly it seemed to me to have lost many of the aspects of a private bill as time went on. That was the first feeling that made me uneasy and made me feel that the house was not being treated with perfect candour. Perhaps that is not an entirely unprecedented experience for us. Therefore I began to feel more interest in it, and finally I came to the conclusion that it was a matter which concerned all of us.

There are one or two other things I should like to say about it. First of all I must admit I was impressed with the argument that we should vote for second reading because it would go to a committee and then all would be well. Incidentally, when I read the evidence of the committee and see what happened there I have a feeling that I was what might be called a "sucker" in ever paying very much attention to that argument. I had never realized before that, whereas in this house many means have been worked out over the century to protect the rights of minorities, so far as I can discern in a committee there is no means of protecting those rights at all. The minority is entirely subject to the will of the majority, and in this case I think the will of the majority was exercised in a rather unfortunate manner.

Mr. Knowles: The railroad committee.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Last night my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, was taken up for suggesting that a certain gentleman who had to do with this committee had acted in a high-handed manner. Apparently that was regarded as a term which perhaps should not be used in the house. I am not offering

[Mr. Macdonald (Greenwood).]

any opinion whether it should or should not. I am only saying I think it was a gross understatement of what happened in that committee.

Of course we remember the beginning of this difficulty. It all goes back to the days almost exactly a year ago when the government was getting ready, in perhaps unseemly haste, for an election. I will not say an unseemly election because that might sound as if one were feeling a little personal about it. At any rate, they were getting ready in a hurry for an election. A lot of things were done in a great hurry, and as has been pointed out not quite as well done as they might have been. The leader of the opposition and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre have outlined that in detail clearly and cogently, and I have no intention of going over it again. I observe that it is almost nine o'clock, Mr. Chairman. I move the adjournment of the debate.

Section stands.

Progress reported.

**PURCHASE BY C.P.R. OF SHAWINIGAN FALLS
TERMINAL RAILWAY CAPITAL STOCK**

The house resumed, from Monday, May 1, consideration in committee of Bill No. 88, respecting the purchase by Canadian Pacific Railway Company of shares of the capital stock of the Shawinigan Falls Terminal Railway Company—Mr. Pinard—Mr. Dion in the chair.

Bill reported, read the third time and passed.

SUPPLY

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Fournier (Hull) for committee of supply, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Drew.

COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN CANADA

Mr. E. G. Hansell (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, when the house rose at six o'clock, we were dealing with the amendment that had been proposed by the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Drew), to the effect that this house is of the opinion that appropriate legislation should be introduced so that communist and similar activities in Canada may be made an offence punishable under the Criminal Code. I listened with a good deal of interest to the leader of the opposition, to the reply by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), and also to the speech by the member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis). All three speakers put forth some remarkable thoughts, with some of which I agree and others with which I disagree.

It does seem to me that, in order to make a motion of this kind effective, it would be necessary for us to define our terms. In fact, I think we have come to a place in our