

Northern Pipeline

wording is entirely accurate. The other point, which I think is more important, is that if a federal financial guarantee was ever required, it would come before parliament in the normal course of business.

For both those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is necessary to include particularly in the second part of the amendment, the words "guaranteeing the highest" as proposed. I recommend that the House reject motion No. 1.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) had taken the trouble to look in the Oxford dictionary for the definitions of "ensure" and "guarantee", he would agree that the terms are synonymous. According to Oxford, "ensure" means "to make certain, to secure something to or for a person". "Guarantee" in the Oxford dictionary means exactly the same thing. So the motion with respect to changing the word "ensuring" in sub-clause (f) of clause 3 is mere grandstanding, as far as I am concerned.

The hon. member knows that his party is in a difficult position because they know the benefits of this pipeline to the west, apart of which enjoys, for the moment at least, a government of their own political stripe. It would have assisted greatly in the debate if the hon. member had been in attendance at the committee meetings. The companies involved in the building of this line have no fears whatsoever that the Canadian steel industry and Canadian labour will not be employed to the fullest possible extent. Indeed, they know that Canadian labour organizations want this bill, and they do not want it cluttered up or obstructed, which appears to be the course of the NDP at the moment.

The Canadian steel industry has expressed full confidence not only in being able to supply the steel for the Canadian section, but also in bidding successfully on the American portion of the line. I think that disposes of the grandstanding approach to changing the word "ensure" to "guarantee". It is a very feeble attempt at gaining media attention for something that is impractical.

The minister has mentioned the two reasons that this amendment is impractical, and it sharpens the differences between the position taken by the NDP and our own position. The NDP wants guarantees written into the legislation with respect to the Canadian provisions of the international agreement. Canadian labour does not want that. The Canadian steel industry does not want that. The Canadian pipe industry does not want that. Operating companies do not want that. So why is there all this grandstanding on the part of the NDP?

● (2122)

It has been our intention from the outset to assist the passage of this bill, but in doing so to ensure the legislation would be improved so as to guarantee that the best interests of Canadians would be served. In doing that, we gave very close scrutiny to the section of the bill dealing with Canadian content.

[Mr. Faulkner.]

When the bill was first introduced it was immediately apparent that there were several major omissions and that amendments would be required to rectify defects. The committee that was set up specifically to focus on an examination of the bill did an excellent job, in my view. It also did a unique job because this is the first time that a bill has passed through committee in terms of a negotiating process which resulted in no votes on clauses. This was because we got the most from our suggested amendments that we could possibly get from the government.

By far the most important omission was the absence of any guarantee to ensure the very admirable intention spelled out in the Canada-U.S. international agreement as to Canadian content—that is, the use of Canadian labour, materials and products. We, as much as they, wanted guarantees that these intentions would be carried out. The NDP took the unworkable and impracticable position that the bill should be amended so as to legislate that kind of guarantee.

That is impracticable and unworkable for two reasons. First of all, we are bound by an international agreement which we signed with the United States. Second, as the minister pointed out, it would offend GATT. Those two impediments are enough to destroy the suggested addition of sub-clause (g).

It is worthy of note that neither Canadian labour leaders themselves nor the steel and pipe producers in Canada wanted any such guarantees written into the bill. It also should be remembered—and this is for the benefit of the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie—that Premier Blakeney of Saskatchewan, at the recent federal-provincial conference here in Ottawa, took a very strong stand that the pipeline legislation should not be obstructed by reason of the vital importance of the pipeline project to his province and his government, to say nothing of the national interest to be served and of the 100,000 man-year jobs that would be supplied in a time of high unemployment.

We on this side also wanted to achieve the admirable objective of guarantees with respect to Canadian content but our alternative was not the impracticable and unworkable alternative suggested by the NDP. Our alternative was set forth in the speech of our leader on August 14 last, when the project was first discussed. We wanted a parliamentary review. How much more preferable is the elective process than a civil service process for review. They suggested that a special committee should be set up comprised of civil servants but that has been ruled out of order. We wanted the elected representatives to do it by setting up a special committee, and the government has accepted that. They have gone a long way to meet our suggestions and have accepted that position.

The special standing committee on northern pipelines is going to be set up. It will review on a quarterly basis, or at least on a four-month basis—which is the extent to which I am prepared to negotiate—all aspects of the progress of the pipeline. All aspects, Mr. Speaker—Canadian content provisions, labour provisions, the orders and directions of the boards, the agreements that are reached, the contracts that are submitted. This committee is going to be hard at work looking