

Alberta Natural Gas Company

Mr. Maybank: In view of the fact that it does not matter very much to me what the accusations of the hon. member are, and in view of the fact that it is not likely I shall bother to answer them, perhaps I should indicate to the committee my utter indifference to the charges he has made or may make.

Mr. Green: That is not a point of order, either, but that is typical of the hon. member's attitude in the committee. Now I see he is walking out; he cannot take any more.

The Deputy Chairman: Order.

Mr. Maybank: Mr. Chairman—

The Deputy Chairman: If the hon. member wishes to speak to a point of order he may do so.

Mr. Maybank: No, I really don't wish to speak at all. I think I will just let the hon. member go ahead.

The Deputy Chairman: I merely asked the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra to be careful in the choice of his words. I know the hon. member does not want to use unparliamentary or offensive language, and of course when it comes to passing judgment on such expressions it is sometimes difficult to say whether they may be offensive to the hon. member to whom they are directed. Therefore, in order to preserve order in the committee, I merely ask the hon. member to be careful in his language.

Mr. Drew: Just so we may have some slight understanding of what this is about, Mr. Chairman, would you indicate what words could possibly have been regarded as offensive?

The Deputy Chairman: The words "high-handed and arbitrary manner"—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

The Deputy Chairman: The words "high-handed and arbitrary manner" were applied to the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. I am not giving a ruling on this issue, but in Beauséjour there is a whole list of words that in the past have been ruled unparliamentary. When it comes to offensive words there is a rule of a general character which states that it depends upon the tone in which they are said, and so on. I think the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra can make his point without risking the use of expressions which may be offensive.

Mr. Green: I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that I could describe the actions of the hon. member much better in unparliamentary language. However, I have no intention of breaking the rules of the house. The action

[Mr. Riley.]

which I think was most open to criticism was taken by this parliamentary assistant on Thursday evening, the second day the committee had been considering this bill. Just a few minutes before eleven, he rose in the committee and made this motion. I am quoting now from the proceedings of that evening:

Mr. Maybank: Mr. Chairman, I wish to move that at the next sitting of this committee we shall commence to consider the bill, clause by clause—and that is the end of the motion.

He continued as follows:

That is to say that at the conclusion of the sitting of the moment we will not proceed any further with the taking of evidence. It is not my intention to express any argument with regard to these things—I feel there may be other people who will wish to argue about them. My own view is that we have had a masterly presentation of triviality long enough.

That was after we had only partially heard the evidence of Mr. Dixon, who is to be president of this Alberta Natural Gas Company. The day before we had started hearing the evidence of Mr. Connolly, the solicitor for the applicants, when on a motion by the member for Cariboo which was supported by all the government members on the committee—

Mr. Goode: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has just made a statement to this house which I am sure he will want to correct.

Mr. Green: Yes, the member for Burnaby-Richmond voted with us. The motion was forced through, and it had the effect of stopping the cross-examination of Mr. Connolly. We had to go on with the evidence of Mr. Dixon. Then the second day, when we were only partially through with the cross-examination of Mr. Dixon, this motion that there could be no cross-examination of witnesses the following day was brought in by the parliamentary assistant. The motion was introduced just before the committee was to adjourn at eleven o'clock. Finally, an additional hour on Friday morning was granted, during which we could cross-examine Mr. Dixon. The effect of all this was that the cross-examination of Mr. Dixon was not completed. Members who had wished to question him were unable to do so. We were unable to question Mr. Connolly further, and no other witnesses could be called. In effect, this was a closure plan initiated in that committee by this parliamentary assistant.

If he was speaking^d for the government, and I believe he was, then that is one matter, and the government must accept responsibility for this procedure which, Mr. Chairman, can only be described as high-handed